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Mark Caunt

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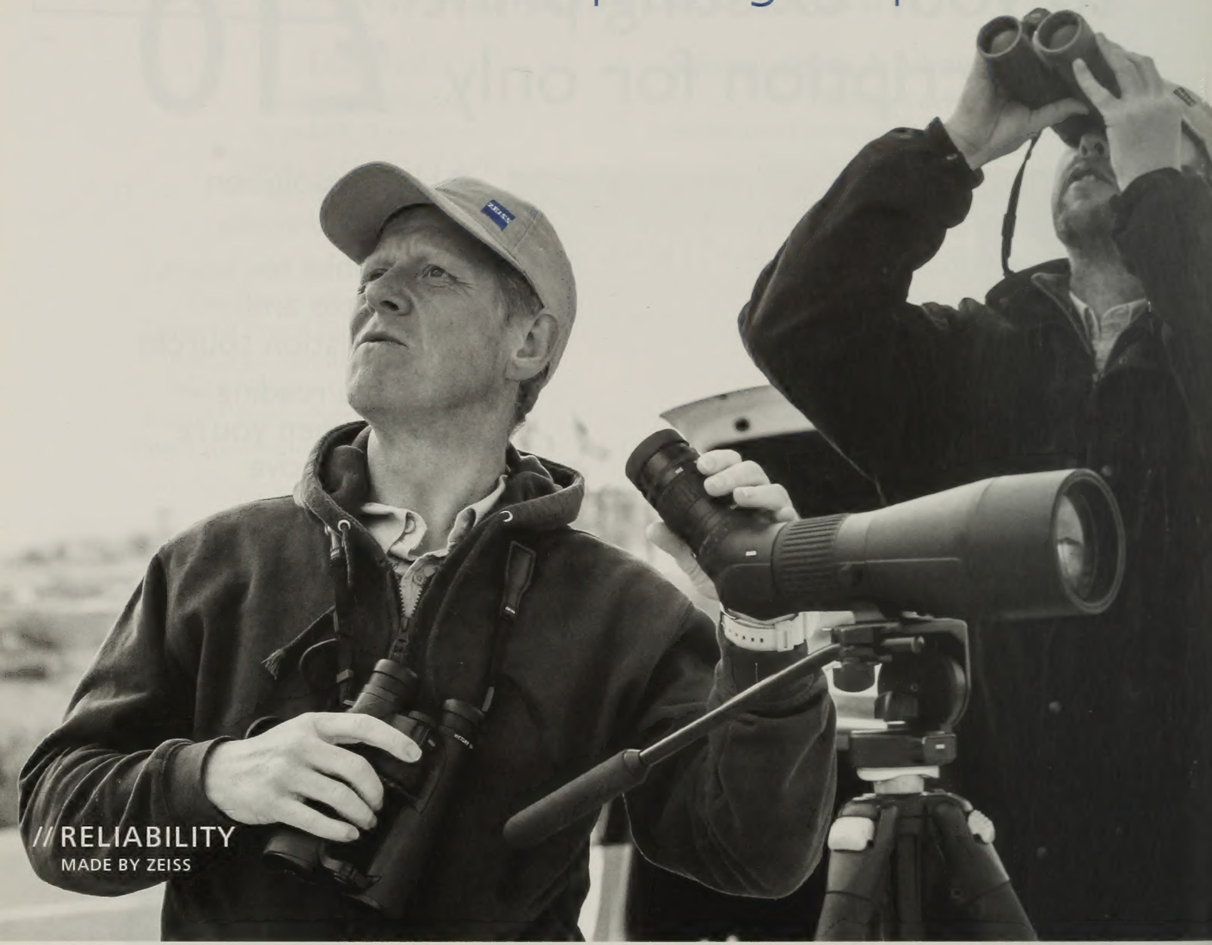

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British Birds

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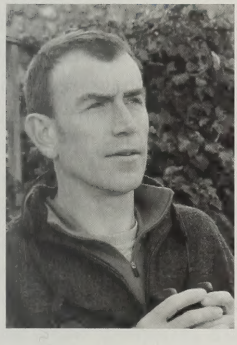

It is a particular pleasure to open this issue with an editorial on House Sparrows by Denis Summers-Smith. As someone who has contributed to *BB* over seven decades, and is still enthusiastically watching his favourite species most days of the year, Denis is an inspiration to me – and many more readers too, I suspect.

Back in the 1980s, when I first started reading *BB*, I cannot pretend that the RBBP report was my favourite feature. It seemed that each year's report was pretty similar to the one last year and was mainly about magnificent birds – most of which I'd never seen – in faraway places. It all felt somewhat remote. Nowadays, there is genuine intrigue to find out what species will be in it – this report has breeding Black-winged Stilts and European Bee-eaters, and a host of other surprising species showing signs of nesting. Of course, the unpredictability is not really a good thing, in that it flags up the fact that our climate, and more generally our environment, is changing all too rapidly – but it does make for a more interesting read.

Finally, I have to apologise for the less-than-impressive print quality of the last issue. Our printers of many years went into administration in August, at extremely short notice, with the result that the issue was late and the quality was below the usual high standard. This was particularly frustrating, since it was an issue that was meant to showcase so many good photographs of birds, but I am confident that the *BB* board's choice of a new printer – Swallowtail Print – will mean a quick resolution to the short-term upheaval. At least readers of our digital edition will have seen the photos at their best – and downloadable to their devices on 1st August, together with additional images that we couldn't fit in the magazine

Roger Riddington

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Swansong: a lifetime with sparrows

I began my study of House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* in 1947. I have now watched them in more than 70 countries, from sea level in Tierra del Fuego to over 2,000 m in the Himalayas; from a dentist's chair in Newbury to 340 m below ground in Frickley Colliery in Yorkshire, where a pair successfully reared three young. They still surprise and fascinate me. In 1950, a group of sparrows hitched a lift on a ship from Bremerhaven, Germany, and disembarked on reaching Melbourne, in Australia. A young bird boarded Pan Am Flight 811 from Los Angeles to Sydney on 4th July (Independence Day!) in 1981, but was unlucky in that it was promptly despatched by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Authorities. Another was killed at Lord's, the home of cricket, by a fast delivery from Jahangir Khan in a match between the MCC and Cambridge University on 3rd July 1939. It can be seen, mounted on the match ball, in the Memorial Gallery. But probably the most memorable is the one that interfered with an attempt by the Dutch TV Company Endemol to break the world record of collapsing more than four million dominoes in a row. The event was being set up in an exhibition hall by a group of volunteers. They were in their fourth week when a sparrow got into the hall and managed to topple some of the dominoes. It was shot. Endemol was fined €200 for killing a protected bird. The stuffed bird can now be seen, mounted on a box of dominoes, in the Rotterdam Natural History Museum. In 1980, they even learnt to open electronic doors by flying through the light beam.

In the early 1920s, I paid a visit to the Ayrshire coast. With my mother's opera glasses, I saw some birds entering nesting holes in a cliff. Initially, I thought they were buntings. Closer observation revealed that they were in fact male House Sparrows. Up to that point I was familiar only with the sparrows in the suburb of Glasgow where I lived. This was in the days of coal fires and pea-souper fogs, so these birds were dull and dingy. An adult male House Sparrow living in open country is, in contrast, a magnificently colourful bird.

I joined the Territorial Army in 1937 and was called up in 1939. In 1944, I was admitted to Ronkswood Hospital in Worcester, having been wounded in France some six weeks after landing on D-Day. Ronkswood had been a TB hospital, but was converted to a holding unit where wounded soldiers were retained until it seemed likely that you were going to live. I was there for five weeks. Until then the House Sparrow had been just another bird, but my view of the species quickly changed. The ward was at ground level, it was high summer and the doors were kept open. Despite the constant activity, sparrows came in regularly to look for food. I was fascinated by the way they behaved in the busy ward. They were not shy, although always alert to their surroundings. Three years later, having completed my university course that was interrupted by the war, I moved to the small village of Highclere, in Hampshire, and wanted to concentrate my ornithological interest on one species. Petrol rationing limited the distance I could travel. Sparrows were nesting on my house and, recalling the way they had fascinated me when I was in hospital, I thought that they were the obvious choice.

House Sparrows are extremely wary and alter their behaviour if closely watched. I decided to limit my interference with them to colour-ringing, so that I could recognise the individuals. A letter to Elsie Leach at the Natural History Museum resulted in a ringing permit by return of post! My findings on the colonial behaviour of House Sparrows, and the interactions between colonies in two six-year studies I carried out (first in Highclere and later in a surburban area of Stockton-on-Tees, where I moved to in 1954), were published and marked the start of more than 60 years of formal study. Here, I want to concentrate on some more-recent findings and ideas that have not previously been reported.

House Sparrows are primarily vegetarian, but the nestlings require invertebrates, particularly in the first few days of life, if they are to fledge successfully. The adults seem able to

Table 1. Breeding-season density of House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* (no. of individuals per hectare) in two privately built housing estates in Guisborough, Cleveland.

	Pine Hills (30.0 ha, built 1968–69)	Rivers Estate (35.6 ha, built 1950s)
1998	4.6	4.0
2008	1.7	1.6

anticipate this. At the beginning of the breeding season, they search the shrubs in my suburban garden in Guisborough, in Cleveland. They appear not to collect or eat invertebrates such as aphids, which makes me wonder if they are just checking their availability.

Urban House Sparrows suffered a significant decline in the 1990s. This was first reported in London, but it was not until the late 1990s that I became aware of it. A subsequent trawl through newspaper articles and local bird reports suggested that the decline had actually started about 1990. In 1998 I carried out breeding-season censuses in two privately built housing estates in suburban Guisborough and repeated these in 2008. Table 1 summarises my results.

In 2008, I also began a study of the sparrows in a nearby social housing estate, Dorset Road Estate. Built in the 1950s, this 10-ha estate had the same density of houses as pre-war social housing estates in the town centre (48 dwellings/ha), but was very different in that the houses are in long terraces separated by large areas of grass. The grassed areas are mown by the council at about five-week intervals during the growing season, allowing the grass to set seed. There is no chemical treatment so they provide plenty of the invertebrates essential for rearing sparrow chicks. The houses have pantile roofs giving ample nesting opportunities. I carried out breeding-season population counts in this estate during 2008–13 (fig. 1).

The density of 9.8 individuals/ha in 2008 far exceeded the 4–5 individuals/ha I had previously found in some 30 urban/suburban colonies, mostly in the UK but including one each in Ireland and Belgium. Even more surprisingly, there was a remarkable increase over the six years, which requires some explanation, since I cannot believe that this colony is unique in the east of England, where according to the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey urban House Sparrow populations are at best stable.

In previous studies with colour-ringed sparrows, I found that adults searched for food for the nestlings within 50 m of the nest. However, the birds from the Dorset Road Estate that collected food from my garden were travelling at least 200 m. And, earlier in the season, they also collected feathers from this distance. According to a study at the University of Granada, the females invest more energy in laying eggs when the male brings more feathers to the nest. Perhaps they identify such a male as likely to be of more help in rearing the young than a philandering one more interested in seeking another female partner.

The fact that the Dorset Road Estate is characterised by limited road traffic (access is restricted to a single spine road, limited to one direction of flow) piqued my interest, and prompted the hypothesis that one factor in the urban sparrow decline is atmospheric pollution by particulates (nanoparticles) from the exhausts of diesel engines. The respiratory system in vertebrates has evolved to filter out dust not nano-sized particles. This could be an important factor affecting the development of

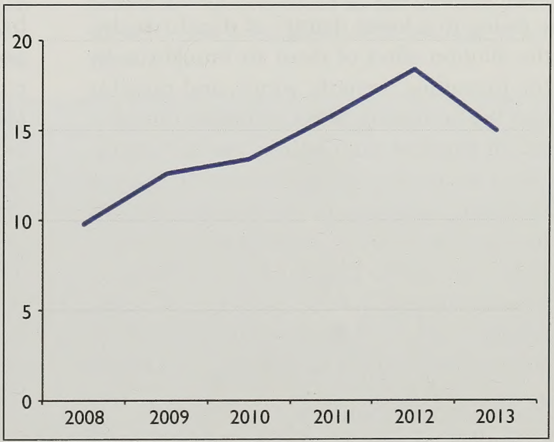

Fig. 1. Breeding-season censuses of House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* on the Dorset Road Estate in Guisborough, Cleveland, showing density (no. of individuals per hectare) during 2008–13.

Denis Summers-Smith

287. The study area in Guisborough, Cleveland, May 2008.

juvenile sparrows. There is circumstantial evidence to support this hypothesis. A study by the WHO in Europe published in 2005 found that children living in town centres suffered from respiratory disease and interference with their neurological development. Urban House Sparrows occupy the same environment and could be even more susceptible than humans because of the unique avian respiratory system that gives birds the highest gas exchange rate capacity in vertebrates. The decline of House Sparrows in the UK is greatest in London and the southeast, the area that suffers some of the worst atmospheric pollution in the UK (for example, Marylebone Road, in London, regularly has a value of 70–80 µg/m³ – the EU Air Quality Standard is 25 µg/m³). Pollution in the southeast of England stems not only from the number of diesel-engine vehicles, but also from the drift of polluted air from the Continent. In the west, where the air is less polluted – owing to a lower density of diesel vehicles, the dilution effect of clean air brought in by the prevailing westerly winds, and possibly also the 'scrubbing' effect of higher rainfall – urban sparrow populations are increasing. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that road traffic is a factor in urban sparrow decline. For example, Helen Baker, currently President of the London Natural History Society, found that, in a survey of seven tetrads north of Heathrow, House Sparrows were present only in quiet residential streets with light traffic.

The obvious way to test my hypothesis would be to compare the particulate concentration in areas where the populations are stable or still in decline with that where populations are increasing, preferably using adjacent colonies, such as mine in Guisborough. Determining the particulate level is neither easy nor cheap, although work at the University of Lancaster has shown that leaves collect particulates when drawing in air through their stomata, offering one potential avenue for further investigation. My problem is that I no longer have the energy nor the facilities to carry out this work but it is, in my view, a potentially hugely important research area, not only for the sparrows – much as I love them – but for a range of other urban wildlife as well as for the children of our own species.

Finally, a word of warning. Carrying out breeding censuses in urban areas is extremely hazardous. I have been interviewed by the police on four separate occasions following complaints about a suspicious character looking at houses through binoculars in the early hours, just when people are getting dressed. Fortunately, the police believed my explanation and on one occasion even suggested than in future I should park my car well away so that I did not provide the means of identification.

Denis Summers-Smith

Denis Summers-Smith's first paper on House Sparrows in *BB* was published in 1956 (*Brit. Birds* 49: 465–488), and he has observed with some satisfaction that this editorial extends his contributions to the journal, the majority of them on House Sparrows, to more than 60 years.

News and comment

Compiled by Adrian Pitches

Opinions expressed in this feature are not necessarily those of *British Birds*

Natural England grants Buzzard killing licence

Natural England has granted the first-ever licence to cull a protected bird of prey, permitting the 'control' of up to ten Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* to 'prevent serious damage to young Pheasants [*Phasianus colchicus*].'

NE has refused to identify the applicant but it seems highly likely that it is the Northumberland gamekeeper who has persistently applied to kill Buzzards near his release pens and who (bankrolled by the shooting fraternity) took High Court action to achieve his lethal aims. In November, a High Court judge ruled that the refusal of his applications to kill Buzzards was unlawful (*Brit. Birds* 109: 4) and Natural England has now granted the first licence to 'control' a legally protected bird of prey since the Protection of Birds Act was passed in 1954.

RSPB Conservation Director Martin Harper condemned the decision: 'The killing of a recovering British bird of prey to protect an introduced gamebird for the benefit of commercial interests is wrong. The decision sets a worrying precedent. What will be next? Red Kites [*Milvus milvus*]? Peregrines [*Falco peregrinus*]? Hen Harriers [*Circus cyaneus*]?

'Forty-five million Pheasants and six million Red-legged Partridges *Alectoris rufa* are released into the countryside each year. We don't know what the ecological consequences of this are but it's hardly surprising that it attracts predators. The loss of some of these gamebirds is an inevitable consequence of doing business. Natural predators should not be bearing the cost in this instance. What we really need is the gamekeeping industry to identify ways in which they can live alongside Buzzards and invest in protecting their poults without resorting to lethal control.'

You can read Martin's blog in full here: http://bit.ly/2ahBB3s

Defending this shameful precedent, NE issued a lengthy statement: 'We recognise the strength of public feeling following the decision to issue a licence to control up to ten Buzzards. In assessing the Buzzard licence application we took into account the legislative tests and policy guidance, the evidence received from the applicant, industry guidance and scientific literature. The licence to control Buzzards was issued to protect against serious damage to livestock. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 defines livestock as any animal which is "kept for the provision or improvement of shooting or fishing".

'Our guidance says that where birds are either in pens or significantly dependent on people, they are classed as livestock. As Pheasants are released at a relatively young age, they will be dependent on the gamekeeper for several weeks at least. Natural England revised this guidance to take account of the High Court ruling, having consulted our stakeholders.

'We would not consider licensing any activity which would adversely affect the conservation status of a species. Buzzards are now widespread in England, with over 60,000 pairs in the UK. The loss of a small number of birds at the specified site will have no impact on the overall conservation status of the species.

'It is illegal to kill wild birds without a licence from Natural England and anyone who suspects a wildlife crime should report details to the police.'

The irony of that last sentence is inescapable. An industry in which brazen criminality is endemic – and reported in this column every month – has been given carte blanche to kill raptors.

Robert Canis/FLPA

288. Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, North Kent Marshes, June 2010.

Police admit decision not to prosecute pole-trap keeper was wrong

The decision by North Yorkshire Police not to prosecute a gamekeeper who set three barbaric pole traps on a grouse moor in the Yorkshire Dales National Park after a Hen Harrier was seen in the area (*Brit. Birds* 109: 370–371) was greeted with incredulity by RSPB investigators. Instead the police issued the 23-year-old man – who admitted his crime – with a caution.

But now Assistant Chief Constable Amanda Oliver has admitted that the police action was wrong and that the gamekeeper should have been prosecuted. A number of people made a formal complaint about the police action and this is Ms Oliver's response: 'Police officers have a level of discretion in deciding how to deal with a case, based on the specific circumstances of the incident. However, the review concluded that if the correct guidelines had been used, it is likely that the man would have been charged, rather than cautioned.

'It is important to remember that a police caution is not a "let off". A person who has been cautioned has a criminal record, and there can be very serious consequences as a result. Depending on the circumstances, they may lose their job and income, and there may also be implications for the person's future employment. A decision was also made to revoke this man's firearms licence as a result of his involvement in this offence.

'As a result of the review, we asked the Crown Prosecution Service to consider whether further action should be taken on this case, and provided them with other details of our activity related to the man involved. After consideration, the CPS decided that, taking all matters into account, including that a decision had already been made, no further action should be taken.

'I would like to reassure you that the mistake we made on the use of guidelines was isolated to this particular case. Nonetheless, we have taken the matter very seriously, and we have ensured we have done everything we can to avoid mistakes happening in the future. We have amended our policy on how wildlife crimes are dealt with by investigators and decision-makers, and advice from specially trained officers is now sought in every case. We are also using our position as the National Police Chiefs' Council lead on rural and wildlife crime to share what we have learned with other police services across the UK.

'Thank you for raising this matter with us. On behalf of North Yorkshire Police, I would like to apologise for the distress that this matter has caused you, and assure you that we will do our very best to protect our local wildlife, and deliver the police national wildlife action plan here in North Yorkshire and more widely.'

Hen Harriers in the headlines

Eight months after it was launched (*Brit. Birds* 109: 73), the RSPB has announced that it has withdrawn its support from Defra's Hen Harrier Action Plan as illegal persecution of raptors has continued unabated during the 2016 breeding season. Announcing the decision on his blog, RSPB Conservation Director Martin Harper writes more in sorrow than in anger: 'In 2015, we were all extremely frustrated by there being just six successful Hen Harrier nests from 12 attempts in England. 2016 is on course to be much worse, with only three nests at the time of writing, none of which are on grouse moors.

'Some will argue that the weather or vole population is to blame. However, early returns from the National Hen Harrier Survey suggest that numbers away from intensively managed grouse moors in north and west Scotland have done OK. We remain convinced that the primary reason for the Hen Harrier's continuing scarcity remains illegal killing.

'Simply put, Hen Harriers (and other birds of prey) are illegally killed on some estates because they eat grouse. Crimes are committed to increase the number of grouse that can be shot. This year, there have been a series of depressingly predictable incidents in England and Scotland: the disappearance of satellite-tagged Hen Harriers, the use of pole traps, the Hen Harrier decoy in the Peak District [*Brit. Birds* 109: 370]. All of this adds up to a picture which shows that the commitments made in the Hen Harrier Action Plan are not being delivered. People are still breaking the law and not enough is being done within the grouse shooting community to effect change.

'Some will argue that we should be more patient as behavioural change takes time. But the Hen Harrier does not have time on its side and the longer Hen Harriers remain on the brink, the greater public antipathy towards intensive grouse shooting will become. Hen Harriers and other birds of prey in our uplands will not recover without a completely different approach. We have therefore decided to withdraw our support from Defra's Hen Harrier Action Plan.

'My preference is always for the partnership approach, but partnership requires action from both sides. In this case, that has failed. When shooting organisations are either unable or unwilling to lead the necessary change to rein in illegal activity, then reform must be delivered from outside. That is what we will now seek to do through promoting licensing of grouse shoots.'

You can read the full statement here: http://bit.ly/2aF4Cqg

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THE PETITION TO BAN DRIVEN GROUSE SHOOTING CURRENTLY HAS
SIGNATURES
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KILLING WILDLIFE FOR FUN IS A DYING BUSINESS

Guy Shorrock

289. Big star, big bird, big bloke: stalwarts of Hen Harrier Day (aka Chris Packham, Henry the Hen Harrier and Mark Avery).

Martin Harper was one of several high-profile attendees at the dozen Hen Harrier Day events held over the weekend of 6th–7th August. An estimated 2,000 people attended gatherings across Britain, from the Inner Hebrides to Dorset, to protest at illegal persecution of Hen Harriers. The biggest event, at the Rainham Marshes RSPB reserve in Greater London, attracted more than 500 supporters including RSPB Chief Executive Mike Clarke, TV presenter Chris Packham and the driving force behind the Hen Harrier campaign, Mark Avery.

And support for Mark's e-petition to ban driven grouse shooting surged during August; entirely appropriately, on the 'Inglorious Twelfth', it passed the magical 100,000-signatures mark. This means that Defra ministers will have to respond with a debate on the grouse shooting industry in Parliament. (The petition remains open until 20th September – if you haven't signed it already, please do – and share the link with all your contacts: https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/125003.)

There was also happier harrier news in August. It was confirmed that two pairs of Hen Harriers successfully nested on Forestry Commission land in Northumberland: www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/fledging-success-for-northumberland-hen-harriers. One pair fledged four young and the other fledged two young (from four eggs that hatched); a third pair nesting nearby lost their young to a Fox *Vulpes vulpes*. Two chicks, one male and one female, at both successful nests were satellite-tagged and you can follow their movements at www.rspb.org.uk/henharrierlife

This is the second successive year that Hen Harriers have nested in the county following eight young fledging from two nests in 2015: the Northumberland Hen Harrier Protection Partnership should be congratulated for safeguarding the majority of England's breeding Hen Harriers. Just across the county border in Cumbria, a single Hen Harrier chick was reared at RSPB Geltsdale with the assistance of supplementary feeding. These three nests account for the RSPB's initial estimate of successful breeding English Hen Harriers in 2016 but other successes may yet be publicised.

Perhaps the most secure Hen Harrier nest in Britain was that of a pair which nested inside an MoD nuclear base in Scotland. Four young were reared at HM Naval Base Clyde's high-security Coulport site, which is the storage and loading facility for the UK's Trident nuclear warheads. Two of these young birds – a male and a female – were also satellite-tagged as part of the RSPB's EU-funded Hen Harrier LIFE+ Project, a five-year programme of nest protection, monitoring, community engagement and investigations work in Scotland and northern England.

Sgt John Simpson, MoD Police wildlife crime officer, said: 'The Security at HM Naval Base Clyde that protects the Submarine Service also provides a sanctuary for Hen Harriers, the most endangered bird of prey in the UK. We understand that Hen Harriers are a necessary part of a healthy functioning countryside and are pleased we can play some part in helping to protect them.'

Blánaid Denman, manager of the Hen Harrier LIFE+ Project, said: 'The last national survey in 2010 found that Scottish Hen Harrier populations had fallen by 20% in just six years, with only 505 pairs remaining. According to an independent government report, Scotland should be able to support up to 1,790 pairs of harriers, but they are still being blighted by illegal killing and disturbance. That's why this type of work is so important, and why it's so positive to see a large landowner like the MoD leading by example and championing these birds.'

And the National Trust for Scotland is celebrating the rare success of a Hen Harrier nest on its Mar Lodge Estate in the Cairngorms National Park. Four young fledged from the nest *on a grouse moor*. The estate managers of this walked-up grouse moor are to be congratulated for a management regime that allows harriers to nest safely on their land. Prospective tenants of the National Trust's grouse moors in the Peak District take note.

Eight Golden Eagles disappear off the radar

Eight satellite-tagged Golden Eagles *Aquila chrysaetos* have disappeared in the Monadhliath Mountains in the past five years – with three birds vanishing in just two months this summer.

The latest disappearance was a young female Golden Eagle named Brodie which fledged in 2014, when she was fitted with a satellite transmitter. Her last recorded position placed her in the northern Monadhliath, southeast of Inverness, on 2nd July.

Since November 2011, eight Golden Eagles – all less than three years old – fitted with satellite transmitters have disappeared in the same area. The birds were being monitored by RSPB Scotland, the Highland Foundation for Wildlife, Natural Research Ltd and Forestry Commission Scotland to study their movements post-fledging.

Despite comprehensive searches of the areas around the last recorded positions of all eight eagles, none of the birds or transmitters have been recovered. (A transmitter continues to send a signal if it becomes detached from a bird, or if a tagged bird dies naturally, allowing recovery of the body.)

The first eagle vanished after last being recorded in the hills above Strathdearn in November 2011; following this a second disappeared in July 2012, and a third in March 2014. In October 2014, transmissions from two further eagles stopped at another location across the valley, three weeks apart. Three eagles' tags stopped transmitting at a scatter of locations in the hills above the River Findhorn, in May, June and July 2016.

Since satellite transmitters were first used to track eagles in Scotland, around ten years ago, several tagged birds have been illegally killed. Four had been poisoned and one had been caught and injured in an illegal trap prior to being deliberately moved to another location. More recently, tagged eagles have tended to go off the radar. In every case, data received from the transmitters prior to their disappearance indicated that the tags were functioning correctly, before suddenly stopping.

The Golden Eagle that disappeared in May 2016, a young female, had fledged from a nest in Galloway in 2015, one of only two fledged young from the tiny population in the south of Scotland that year. The Golden Eagles in this area do not tend to leave the south of Scotland and so it was very unusual that this young bird roamed north rather than exploiting the vacant territories close to where she fledged.

Dave Anderson from the Scottish Raptor Study Group, who tagged this eagle, said: 'This is a very sad end to arguably one of the most important Golden Eagle chicks fledged that year in Scotland. There are no words to describe how disappointed I am at this bird's disappearance.'

RSPB Scotland's Head of Investigations, Ian Thomson, said: 'It's surely no coincidence that the overwhelming majority of satellite-tagged birds of prey that have disappeared in Scotland have been in areas intensively managed for gamebird shooting and in areas that have an appalling previous record of confirmed incidents of raptor persecution. These eight birds have all disappeared in an area where driven grouse moor management dominates the landscape, and where there have been many previous cases of illegal killing of protected raptors, including the poisoning of a Golden Eagle and a White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*.

'Given the reliability of the transmitters, the probability of so many birds disappearing over such a short timescale without some kind of human interference is so small as to be negligible. The pattern we see here is consistent with the birds having been killed and the transmitters destroyed.

'All of these eagles were young birds exploring Scotland before establishing their own territories and with their disappearance any potential future breeding by them to aid the population's recovery is also lost.'

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Rare breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2014

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel

Richard Johnson

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Abstract This report documents the status of 100 rare or scarce species that were recorded breeding, or potentially breeding, in the UK in 2014. Following another mild winter, conditions were generally good for nesting birds. The headline breeders were Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* and European Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster*, with two pairs of each successfully fledging young.

This is the 41st report published by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP), and includes details of 91 species that bred (or showed signs of breeding) in the UK in 2014. Two other rare breeding species (and one subspecies) bred in 2014 but unfortunately no data were received (see Appendix 1). A further seven potential breeding species are listed in Appendix 2, and the total of 100 is among the highest ever reported.

As in 2012 and 2013, the area covered and reported on by the UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel includes the four countries of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), plus the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Using 'the UK' as a shorthand reference, this is the same unit used by other national monitoring programmes, such as the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (e.g. Harris *et al.* 2016) and Birds of Conservation Concern (e.g. Eaton *et al.* 2015). There were no changes to the list of species covered by the RBBP list in 2014; the current list can be downloaded at www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-species-list-full.htm.

Review of the year 2014

Weather conditions for many breeding birds in 2014 were generally good. Winter 2013/14 was mild, with few frosts, although extremely wet and stormy at times. There was flooding in places such as the Somerset Levels and the Thames valley. In contrast, the spring of 2014 was unexceptional with temperatures broadly above average, particularly in April and May. It was the warmest spring in Scotland since 1910. Rainfall was average across the UK but above average in Hampshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. June and July were generally fine and settled, not as warm as in 2013 but still warmer than average. These settled conditions seemed to help the fledging of young birds for those species still nesting at that time.

Two species which have rarely nested before made the headlines. Three pairs of Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* bred, two of which were successful, only the third time that young stilts have fledged in the UK (Ausden *et al.* in press). And late in the summer two pairs of European Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster* were found nesting in the Isle of Wight; these pairs also successfully fledged young, again only the third occasion that that has happened in the UK.

An unusually wide range of rare breeding birds were recorded in the UK in 2014 and among them were potential breeders not previously or only rarely encountered, such as Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, Baillon's Crake *Zapornia pusilla*, Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*, Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*, Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*, Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* and Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*.

Reporting rates for several waterfowl, such as Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Shoveler *A. clypeata* and Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*, increased, reflecting either a good season or possibly more diligent recording in response to pleas from the RBBP Secretary for more information. The conservation programme for Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* has been a success as outlined more fully later in this report. Numbers of Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* also reached a new peak, topping 1,000 pairs for the first time. Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* had their best season for ten years and a pair returned to Scotland for the first time since 2008. There was a westward spread of Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* and an increase in Northern Goshawks *Accipiter gentilis* and Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus*. Other species with higher than usual totals were Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*, which occurred in 21 counties, Corn Crake *Crex crex*, Common Crane *Grus grus*, Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*, Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* and Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*.

Two national surveys were undertaken in 2014 under the Statutory Conservation Agency and RSPB Annual Breeding Bird Scheme (SCARABBS): on the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* and Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*. We present both national and county totals in this report and the organisers of both surveys have provided an overview of the findings.

Some species are poorly recorded every year, especially in Scotland, and so we would like to make a general plea for records of the following species in breeding habitat: Eurasian Wigeon, Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*, Black-throated Diver *G. arctica*, Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*, Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*, Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*, Short-eared Owl *A. flammeus*, Redwing *Turdus iliacus* and Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*.

Data sources and submission

Each year we try to source as much information as possible from all parts of the UK, and we aim to provide prompt and accurate feedback via these annual reports. The most important source of data is the annual return from the bird recorder network (69% of all data submissions in 2014). County and regional recorders are at the heart of bird recording within their area and they are generally in the best position to compile an accurate, site-by-site summary of the breeding evidence for each species. They receive records from a variety of sources, often directly from observers, but increasingly via the BTO/RSPB/BirdWatch Ireland/SOC/WOS BirdTrack system. Recorders, and in turn the RBBP, are highly dependent on birdwatchers submitting records in the first place.

It is vital that birders across the UK make their sightings available, not least for the value these records have for conservation, as outlined below.

The level of returns which have contributed to this report is particularly pleasing. Only one county, Essex, was unable to submit any data by the deadline. Unfortunately, despite a willingness to participate, data from Essex have been available for inclusion in this report in only two of the last five years. One county, Devon, submitted data via a published bird report. Such contributions are inevitably incomplete as they exclude sensitive site information normally submitted to the RBBP for inclusion in the Panel's national archive. Finally, only a limited submission was available from the Outer Hebrides, and it is likely that some species that breed there may be under-reported.

Any data received after the annual deadlines, from any recording area or species study, always make valuable additions to the Panel's long-running national archive even if they do not contribute to the published report for that year. Additions, amendments and corrections to published reports from 2005 onwards are available on the RBBP website (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-reports).

Other important data sources include the reports from Schedule 1 licence holders, Nest Record Scheme returns, Raptor Study Group data, national surveys and counts from RSPB reserves. These additional sources mean that general levels of data provision were broadly comparable with those in recent RBBP reports. The number of unique records for 2014, submitted by the end of May 2016, was 12% higher than in 2013, at almost 7,000.

We request that site data, with grid references, are shared with the RBBP so that our archive is as complete as possible, allowing the maximum benefit to species conservation and the UK's ornithological record. Almost all data are now submitted electronically, mostly in the recommended MS Excel format, with sites listed separately for each species (a template is available at www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-data-submission). Some 67% of all 2014 records carried a 4- or 6-figure grid reference, which represents a continued increase, although clearly there is still scope for improvement. The provision of accurate location data assists with site and species conservation but is also essential for validation and for detection of duplicate records. It continues to be a frustration that some otherwise good records (especially of raptors) could not be used at all because the location could not be verified and compared

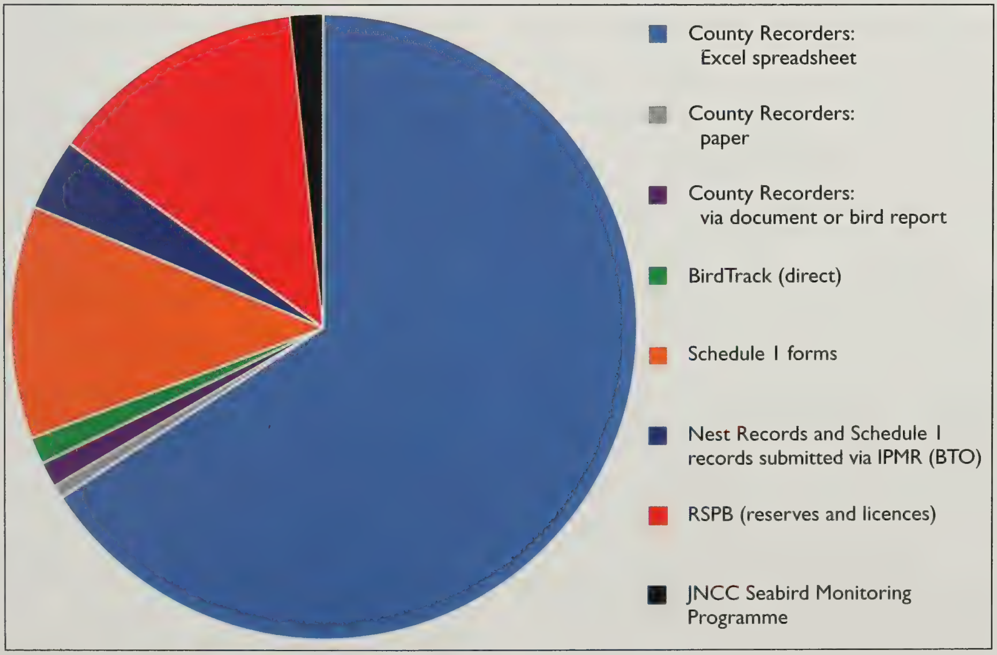


Fig. 1. Sources of data for the 2014 RBBP report.

with other records from the same county.

Generally, we receive data from national surveys and species studies within 12 months of the data being collected, but we are unable to publish our reports until we have sufficient data from the bird recorder network. Many counties have their data ready within 12 months of the end of the breeding season and we urge counties to submit data as soon as possible, ideally by 30th November (i.e. data for 2015 by 30th November 2016). This helps with collation and checking of data, and to maintain the publication schedule of this report. Recommendations and guidelines on data submission are available at www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-recording-standards. Species-specific guidelines are added as they become available (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-species-recording), and anyone with particular experience in monitoring a rare species is encouraged to share their expertise through these guidelines.

Conservation and other uses of RBBP data

It is RBBP policy to make data available for relevant conservation uses, with appropriate controls. Site-specific information is used by the JNCC and the national statutory conservation agencies, and national datasets by the RSPB, for survey and conservation planning. Over the last 12 months, requests for the use of RBBP data have been received for around 40 species. These include assessments of rare breeding birds in Wales to support the Welsh review of birds of conservation concern, and to support projects on waders in Cambridgeshire, Firecrests in Gwent and the breeding habitats of Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris.*

An annual review of the status of all of the UK's birds, at all seasons, is published by the RSPB on behalf of a range of conservation organisations. In recent years, there has been a section on scarce and rare breeding birds giving population estimates and trends (for example Hayhow *et al.* 2015b); the data concerned are provided mainly by the RBBP.

Population totals published in the *BB* reports are widely used by conservation staff at RSPB, BTO, JNCC and the four country agencies. All but the most recent reports are available online (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-reports); the 'Explore Reports' feature (www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-online-reports) permits access to these same reports firstly by species and then by year, which opens up this information to a wider audience. We are keen for individuals to use this to compile species reviews for potential future publication – please contact the Panel Secretary if this is of interest. In all cases where RBBP data are used or referred to, we ask that the contribution of the Panel is acknowledged and that we receive copies of any new datasets compiled and any outputs. Our data access policy is available at www.rbbp.org.uk/rbbp-access-policy.

Birds of Conservation Concern

One of the key roles of the RBBP is to inform conservation decision-making and action. An excellent example of this is the vital role of the Panel's data in Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) reviews. These periodic assessments use a set of standardised criteria to categorise the level of conservation concern for all of the UK's established bird species, with each species placed on the Red (highest concern), Amber or Green list. The BoCC process relies on the availability of robust estimates of various aspects of species status, such as trends in population and range, population size, the proportion of the population at important sites (localisation), the proportion of the international population occurring in the UK, and assessments of status at the European and Global level. Of 247 species considered in the most recent review, BoCC4 (Eaton *et al.* 2015), data from the Panel was used to provide trends and/or other measures required for 50 rare breeding species: it was one of the most important data sources for the assessment.

The results of BoCC4 made sobering reading. The number of species on the Red list increased by 15, to 67; over a quarter of the UK's birds are now Red-listed. In addition, three species were moved to the list of 'former breeders' as there have been no recent breeding records submitted to the Panel. Of these, Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* and European Serin *Serinus serinus* have never been more than very rare breeders in the UK, although in the 1980s it did look as though the latter might be on the verge of colonisation (and, if climate predictions are correct, it may yet do so; Huntley *et* *al.* 2007). The third 'lost' species is Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*, which once bred in 54 counties across the UK (Holloway 1996); it becomes the first once-widespread bird to have been lost from the UK since the Great Bustard *Otis tarda* in 1833. Species moving onto the Red list included seabirds, upland breeders, and an ever-increasing number of long-distance migrants. Rare breeding birds featured among them: Dotterel, Merlin *Falco columbarius*, Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* and Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* were all Red-listed on account of breeding population declines, which in the case of the last two species were measured using RBBP data.

Other RBBP data provided a silver lining to BoCC4's large black cloud, as the Eurasian Bittern was moved from the Red list to Amber because of increasing numbers; clear demonstration of how well-resourced and targeted conservation action can turn species' fortunes around. Red Kite *Milvus milvus* moved to the Green list, a wonderful recovery for a species once considered such a classic threatened species that it was on the cover of the UK's first Red Data Book for birds (Batten *et al.* 1990); it is now sufficiently abundant that it was removed from the RBBP list in 2012. With evidence of a sustained population level above 2,000 pairs, the Woodlark *Lullula arborea* was also removed from the RBBP list in 2012 and is also now Green-listed.

One of the criteria in the BoCC process looks at whether species are localised, with over 50% of the population occurring at the ten most important sites (in which instance they will qualify for the Amber list, if not qualifying against any Red-list criteria). RBBP data were vital in this regard, and it was possible to take advantage of the work coordinated by the JNCC to assess, for a third time, the UK's network of 269 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (Stroud *et al.* 2016). This network has been a pillar of nature conservation in the European Union, so appropriate identification, designation and management of SPAs is vital to ensure protection for the most important sites. Many species for which SPAs are required, from Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* to Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, are monitored by the RBBP, and our data have played a significant role in this assessment of the national SPA network. This is a subject we will return to in next year's report, following publication of the review.

The Panel

The membership of the Panel is: Mark Eaton (Chairman), Dawn Balmer, Ian Francis, Andrew King, David Norman, David Stroud and Mark Holling (Secretary). Members serve in a personal capacity, but some also reflect the interests and requirements of the funding partners. The Panel is funded by the JNCC (on behalf of the country conservation agencies) and the RSPB with additional financial contributions from the BTO. Panel membership aims to achieve broadly representative geographic coverage and to include members who have active involvement in monitoring schemes and specialist research groups, or who participate in various external groups, to facilitate liaison between the Panel and researchers, nest recorders, ringers, surveyors and conservationists.

Terminology

Recording areas

The recording areas used in this report are the same as in previous reports (see Holling *et al.* 2007 and www.rbbp.org.uk); these match the bird recording areas used by recorders across the UK, with Gower and East Glamorgan presented separately *contra* Ballance & Smith (2008). We attempt to collate all breeding records by recording area (usually 'county') wherever possible and urge contributors to submit records in the same manner, via recorders.

To reduce the possibility of duplication with surrounding areas, records from the Greater London recording area, which covers all areas within a 20-mile radius of St Paul's Cathedral, are reported as follows. Under the Greater London heading we list only records from the Inner London area and the old county of Middlesex. Records away from this area and within the counties surrounding London – Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey – are listed under those county headings.

Species banners

For all regular breeding species (those which have bred at least once in the UK and have been recorded at least as present in eight out of the last ten years), we give four pieces of information:

1. An indication of population status in one of four categories:
    - **very rare** (<30 breeding pairs (bp) per annum);
    - **rare** (30–300 bp per annum);
    - **scarce** (301–1,000 bp per annum);
    - **less scarce** (>1,000 bp per annum).
2. A population estimate. If a recent estimate from a national survey is available, this is used and referenced. Otherwise the estimate is based on RBBP data, using the mean maximum population size from the last five years (in this report 2010–14) and shown as '5-yr mean'. In a few cases, where annual coverage is poor, the best available national population estimate is used.
3. The degree of coverage (in 2014), defined as follows:
    - **near-complete** (RBBP reports present more or less accurate annual totals);
    - **high** (a good estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, though a small but unknown proportion has not been recorded/reported);
    - **moderate** (a less accurate estimate of the number of pairs breeding annually, which is nonetheless a significant proportion of the total population);
    - **low** (the quality of the data received is so poor that population estimates are of little value for conservation or status reviews; however, maintaining an archive of known sites is useful, and this information can be used in the design of future targeted surveys).
4. The population status as determined by Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (BoCC4) (Eaton *et al.* 2015).

The BoCC4 status can be Red, Amber or Green. The majority of Red- and Amber-listed species on the RBBP list are categorised as such because of some criteria related to their breeding status, whether it be population size (rarity or recent/historical decline), breeding range (localisation or decline) or international importance of the UK breeding population. Some Amber-listed species are also noted as Red-listed within Europe. Some species, which do not have regular breeding or wintering populations in the UK, are not classified. The only species in this report which is Amber-listed for criteria that are not related to the breeding population is the Eurasian Wigeon, which owes its status to the localised distribution and international importance of its wintering population.

Occasional breeding species are defined as having bred at least once in the UK but are not regular breeders. Potential breeding species have not previously bred in the UK but, in some years, show signs that they may do so (e.g. presence of singing males holding territory, pairs in suitable breeding habitat). New colonists are those species that first bred in the UK during 2010–14 (or subsequently, if known at the time of writing) and have continued to do so.

Definitions of breeding evidence

The definitions of 'Confirmed breeding', 'Probable breeding' and 'Possible breeding' follow those recommended by the European Bird Census Council (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). Within tables, the abbreviation 'Confirmed breeding pairs' means 'Number of pairs confirmed breeding'. Where tables show the number of occupied territories, these are the sum of confirmed and probable breeding pairs, as territorial birds are classed as being probably breeding, unless a nest has (at least) progressed to the stage where eggs have been laid, in which case the pair is classified as a confirmed breeding pair. It is important to note that confirmed breeding is *not* the same as successful breeding; nests that fail with eggs or with young still fall into the confirmed category. A successful breeding pair is one that fledges at least one young bird from a nesting attempt. In the species accounts, the following terminology is used: *x* pairs bred (= confirmed breeding), *y* probable breeding pairs and *z* possible breeding pairs.

Readers should note that in all cases the identity of the birds has been confirmed; it is only breeding *status* that is possible/probable/confirmed. Probable breeding is as defined by EBCC (e.g. a pair holding territory), and does not mean that a breeding attempt probably (i.e. was likely to have) occurred.

The Panel does not routinely include breeding records of hybrids (where one of the parents is a species on the RBBP list) in its reports, e.g. hybrids between Black Duck *Anas rubripes* and Mallard *A. platyrhynchos*, but where young are hatched they will be noted in an Appendix.

Definition of numbers used

Within each species account, numbers given in the format '1–4 pairs' indicate (in this case) one confirmed breeding pair and a maximum total of four breeding pairs (thus also including possible and probable breeding pairs). In the tables, 'n/a' indicates that no data were received from that county, but the species normally breeds there. For some species, estimated totals (in round brackets) are also included, where these have been provided by county recorders according to the criteria given on the RBBP website.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 24 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Amber

24 sites: 15–24 pairs. After two years of poor productivity in Shetland, Whooper Swans had their best year ever there, with 18 young fledging. It is likely that some pairs in the Outer Hebrides were not recorded in 2014, since the islands usually support more than one breeding pair.

Wales

Meirionnydd One site: one possible breeding pair. This pair, at least one member of which was injured, summered and may have made a breeding attempt.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire One site: one pair bred, one small young seen, outcome unknown. **Clyde** One site: one pair bred, two young hatched but did not survive.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll One site: one probable breeding pair. **Caithness** One site: one probable breeding pair. **Highland** Four sites: two pairs bred, fledging a total of eight young; two probable breeding pairs. **Orkney** One site: one pair bred, fledging three young. **Outer Hebrides** One site: one probable breeding pair. **Shetland** Ten sites: nine pairs bred, fledging a total of 18 young; one probable breeding pair.

Northern Ireland

Co. Derry Two sites: one pair bred, one probable breeding pair. **Co. Fermanagh** One site: one probable breeding pair.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Rare: 5-yr mean 179 bp **Coverage: low** Amber

94 sites: 55–188 pairs. The reporting rate of Eurasian Wigeon varies from year to year so it is encouraging to see a larger number of pairs in Highland: most of the UK breeding population nests north of the highland boundary fault, but many pairs go unrecorded. Records of confirmed breeding in southern Britain are unusual and the successful pair in Bedfordshire is the first-ever confirmed breeding record from that county.

England, SW

Somerset One site: one probable breeding pair.

England, SE

Bedfordshire One site: one pair bred, fledging six young. **Berkshire** One site: one possible breeding pair. **Kent** One site: seven pairs bred.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Six sites: five probable and three possible breeding pairs. **Lincolnshire** One site: three possible breeding pairs. **Norfolk** Two sites: two probable and one possible breeding pairs.

England, C

Nottinghamshire Two sites: two possible breeding pairs.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one probable breeding pair. **Cumbria** One site: two pairs bred. **Co. Durham** Six sites: four pairs bred (four broods totalling ten young), one probable and three possible breeding pairs. **Northumberland** One site: two pairs bred (two broods totalling 15 young). **Yorkshire** Four extensive sites: a minimum of nine pairs bred (23 young), 13 probable and two possible breeding pairs.

Wales

Anglesey Two sites: two possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway Four sites: two probable and four possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee Three sites: one probable and three possible breeding pairs. **Fife** Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. **Moray & Nairn** Two sites: three possible breeding pairs. **North-east Scotland** Seven sites: two pairs bred (two broods totalling six young); six possible breeding pairs. **Perth & Kinross** Five sites: three pairs bred (three broods totalling 17 young); three possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Four sites: seven probable breeding pairs. **Caithness** One site: four probable breeding pairs. **Highland** 13 sites: 39 probable and four possible breeding pairs. **Orkney** Nine sites: six pairs bred, ten probable breeding

pairs. **Outer Hebrides** Six sites: seven pairs bred (seven broods totalling 19 young); two probable breeding pairs. **Shetland** Seven sites: 12 pairs bred (seven broods totalling 34 young); two probable breeding pairs.
Northern Ireland
Co. Fermanagh One site: one probable breeding pair.

Records of summering birds and pairs that showed no evidence of breeding are not included in the totals. Pairs are assigned to the possible breeding category based on habitat and behavioural criteria but it can be difficult to distinguish such birds from 'summering' pairs.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Rare: 5-yr mean 28 bp **Coverage: high** Amber

18 sites: 9–29 pairs. Nine confirmed breeding pairs is an improvement on recent years but for the third year running none was proved to breed in Orkney, the former stronghold: the centre of gravity of this species' distribution has perhaps shifted to the islands off the west coast of Scotland. The record from Hampshire is the first from that county.

England, SW
Hampshire One site: one pair bred (female with two young seen in June).
England, E
Cambridgeshire Three sites: two probable and four possible breeding pairs. **Norfolk** One site: one probable breeding pair.
Scotland, S
Dumfries & Galloway One site: three possible breeding pairs.
Scotland, Mid
Fife One site: one possible breeding pair. **Perth & Kinross** One site: one possible breeding pair.
Scotland, N & W
Argyll Two sites: (1) six pairs bred, fledging a total of 34 young; (2) one pair bred, no young fledged. **Orkney** Five sites: (1) two probable breeding pairs; (2)–(5) four probable breeding pairs. **Outer Hebrides** Three sites: one pair bred, fledging four young; two probable breeding pairs.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare: 5-yr mean 96 bp **Coverage: high** Amber

91 sites: 31–120 pairs. Indications are that 2014 was a particularly good year for Garganey, with the highest number of both confirmed breeding and total pairs since 1999 and 1998 respectively (see fig. 1 in Holling *et al.* 2015). The generally warm and settled conditions perhaps led to more arrivals in the UK, with some reaching farther north than usual. In Scotland, for instance, there were records of 15 pairs (including a brood of young in Outer Hebrides) compared with 4–9 pairs in the previous five years.

Garganey	no. sites	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	7	3	11
Avon	1	0	1
Devon	1	0	1
Hampshire	1	1	1
Somerset	3	2	7
Wiltshire	1	0	1
England, SE	14	7	21
Buckinghamshire	1	0	1
Hertfordshire	1	0	1
Kent	7	5	11
Oxfordshire	1	0	1
Sussex	4	2	7
England, E	27	13	39
Cambridgeshire	8	8	19
Lincolnshire	4	1	5
Norfolk	10	0	10
Northamptonshire	1	0	1
Suffolk	4	4	4
England, N	22	7	28
Cheshire & Wirral	3	1	3
Cleveland	2	2	3
Co. Durham	2	1	2
Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	0	2
Yorkshire	13	3	18
Wales	5	0	5
Anglesey	1	0	1

Garganey *cont.*	no. sites	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
Breconshire	1	0	1
Carmarthenshire	1	0	1
Gower	2	0	2
Scotland, S	5	0	5
Clyde	2	0	2
Dumfries & Galloway	2	0	2
Lothian	1	0	1
Scotland, Mid	5	0	5
Angus & Dundee	1	0	1
North-east Scotland	1	0	1
Perth & Kinross	1	0	1
Upper Forth	2	0	2
Scotland, N & W	5	1	5
Argyll	1	0	1
Highland	1	0	1
Orkney	1	0	1
Outer Hebrides	2	1	2
Northern Ireland	1	0	1
Co. Antrim	1	0	1
TOTALS	91	31	120

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 987 bp **Coverage: high** **Amber**

507–1,160 pairs. These are the largest totals reported by the RBBP since Shoveler was added to the Panel's list in 2006 (fig. 2). Whether this reflects an increase in the number or better recording (or both) is not known. Shovelers are widespread, occurring in almost 70% of recording areas in 2014. Pairs consistently seen in suitable habitat up to mid May are likely to be breeding birds and can be recorded as probable breeding. Females with young are adept at concealment later in the season but diligent watchers may be rewarded by the sight of a brood at the edge of waterside vegetation.

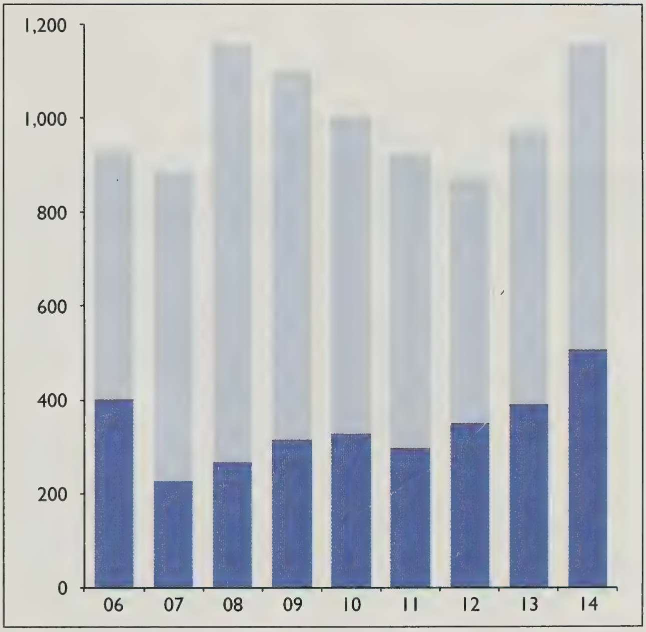


Fig. 2. Breeding Shovelers *Anas clypeata* in the UK: bars show the maximum total number of pairs reported, 2006–14 (confirmed breeding pairs in darker blue).

Shoveler	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	10	32
Avon	1	2
Devon	0	3
Dorset	5	7
Gloucestershire	0	1
Hampshire	1	4
Isle of Wight	0	1
Somerset	3	13
Wiltshire	0	1
England, SE	108	224
Berkshire	2	6
Essex	38	54
Hertfordshire	2	13
Kent	49	75
Oxfordshire	0	35
Surrey	1	3
Sussex	16	38
England, E	212	503
Cambridgeshire	71	296
Lincolnshire	39	39
Norfolk	40	105
Suffolk	62	63
England, C	23	24
Derbyshire	1	1
Leicestershire & Rutland	1	1
Nottinghamshire	20	20

Shoveler *cont.*	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
West Midlands	0	1
Worcestershire	1	1
England, N	**82**	**210**
Cheshire & Wirral	5	9
Cleveland	8	16
Cumbria	1	5
Co. Durham	1	4
Greater Manchester	0	2
Lancashire & N Merseyside	11	28
Northumberland	2	2
Yorkshire	54	144
Wales	**7**	**33**
Anglesey	0	24
Denbigh & Flint	1	2
Gower	1	1
Gwent	3	3
Pembrokeshire	2	3
Scotland, S	**1**	**19**
Borders	0	3
Clyde	0	3
Dumfries & Galloway	1	12
Lothian	0	1
Scotland, Mid	**20**	**30**
Angus & Dundee	1	4
Fife	1	1
North-east Scotland	0	7
Perth & Kinross	18	18
Scotland, N & W	**37**	**76**
Argyll	20	33
Caithness	3	5
Highland	1	1
Orkney	4	24
Outer Hebrides	7	11
Shetland	2	2
Northern Ireland	**7**	**8**
Co. Antrim	7	7
Co. Fermanagh	0	1
Isle of Man	**0**	**1**
TOTALS	507	1,160

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 682 bp **Coverage: high** **Red**

422–838 pairs. As for Shoveler, the total number of pairs of Common Pochard is the highest ever reported (Pochard was added to the RBBP list in 1986). This continues a long-term upward

Common Pochard	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	**18**	**96**
Avon	4	4
Devon	1	1
Dorset	1	21
Gloucestershire	0	6
Hampshire	2	11
Isles of Scilly	2	2
Somerset	8	49
Wiltshire	0	2
England, SE	**185**	**285**
Bedfordshire	16	16
Berkshire	9	11
Essex	57	88
Greater London	15	19
Hertfordshire	13	41
Kent	57	64
Oxfordshire	0	17
Surrey	10	14
Sussex	8	15
England, E	**53**	**208**
Cambridgeshire	9	150
Lincolnshire	21	21
Norfolk	14	28
Suffolk	9	9
England, C	**13**	**13**
Derbyshire	2	2
Leicestershire & Rutland	2	2
Nottinghamshire	4	4
Staffordshire	3	3
Worcestershire	2	2
England, N	**95**	**169**
Cheshire & Wirral	12	13
Cleveland	6	41
Co. Durham	2	2
Greater Manchester	0	3
Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	26
Northumberland	6	6
Yorkshire	68	78
Wales	**29**	**30**
Anglesey	18	19
Carmarthenshire	6	6
Gwent	5	5
Scotland, S	**0**	**2**
Clyde	0	2
Scotland, Mid	**2**	**3**
Fife	0	1
Perth & Kinross	2	2
Northern Ireland	**26**	**31**
Co. Antrim	1	6
Co. Armagh	23	23
Co. Tyrone	2	2
Channel Islands	**1**	**1**
Jersey	1	1
TOTALS	422	838

trend, despite the generally lower numbers reported since 2011 (see fig. 2 in Holling *et al.* 2014), in contrast to the decline in numbers of wintering Pochards in the UK (Frost *et al.* 2016). Breeding Pochards are still rare in Scotland and parts of northern England.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

Occasional breeder; last bred in 1999

Two sites: 1–2 pairs. After 12 years with no records of confirmed breeding in the UK, a female Greater Scaup was seen with young in North-east Scotland in 2012, and in 2014 there was a similar record of a female and a single duckling seen in Perth & Kinross (which came after 11 Scaup were recorded at the site earlier in the year). There is nevertheless a possibility that both records could be the result of a mixed pairing, perhaps with a Tufted Duck *A. fuligula.*

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: a pair frequented a potential breeding loch for six days in May, the female also having been seen five days earlier. **Perth & Kinross** One site: a female was seen with a three-week-old duckling on 6th July.

Ben Green

Greater Scaups *Aythya marila*

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Rare: 52 bp (Eaton et *al.* 2008) **Coverage: near-complete** **Red**

14 sites: 18–43 pairs. A dedicated survey of known breeding lochs by RSPB Scotland produced the highest total of pairs since the 2007 survey when 52 pairs were found (Eaton *et al.* 2008). In 2014, the first scoters since 2005 were found at breeding lochs in Argyll. Note that one bird there formed a mixed pair with a Velvet Scoter *M. fusca.* Common Scoter remains Red-listed and Hancock *et al.* (2015) showed that there are two key factors in determining which lochs are used for breeding: areas of shallow water and an ample supply of large aquatic invertebrates.

England, E

Norfolk One site: well out of the species' normal breeding range, a pair behaved as if nest-building at a brackish pool and were present from mid April to mid May.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross Two sites: (1) one pair bred, a female was seen with a brood of two; (2) three possible breeding pairs (only females recorded).

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Two sites: (1) three probable breeding pairs; (2) one mixed pair (with Velvet Scoter). **Caithness/Highland** One extensive site (Flow Country): seven pairs bred (seven broods yielded at least 17 young but only two known to have fledged); five probable breeding pairs. **Caithness (elsewhere)** One site: three probable breeding pairs. **Highland (elsewhere)** Six sites: ten pairs bred, nine nests with eggs were found and five broods totalling 24 young recorded; eight possible breeding pairs (all single males). **Orkney** One site: one possible breeding pair.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Rare: 5-yr mean 110 bp **Coverage: low**

Amber

A minimum of 70 breeding females reported. Reduced monitoring of the core Speyside population in recent years and cessation of monitoring of the Deeside population in 2014 both contributed to the lowest number of breeding females recorded since 2001. In 2009, 218 breeding females were reported but trends since then are unclear.

A female with seven ducklings in mid May at a site in Greater London/Hertfordshire carried a blue plastic ring and so is assumed to have been released from captivity, although the male of the pair may have been wild. Other pairs and individuals lingered into the summer and were reported from at least six other counties: Avon, Cumbria, Northamptonshire, Fife, Leicestershire & Rutland and Perth & Kinross.

England, N

Northumberland One site: two pairs bred. A total of 16 ducklings hatched but only two fledged.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn Two sites: one probable and one possible breeding pair. **North-east Scotland** One site: four pairs bred, seen with a total of 15 young. No monitoring was undertaken in Deeside where 43 pairs were recorded breeding in 2013.

Scotland, N & W

Highland Badenoch & Strathspey: at least 64 pairs bred, two probable breeding pairs.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 761 singing males **Coverage: high**

Amber

0–439 singing males or pairs. After a poor year in 2013, overall numbers of Common Quail in 2014 were more typical, although the total of 54 in north and west Scotland was unusually high, even higher than the 39 in the last 'Quail year', in 2011. In Highland, dates of first recording show that the majority (54%) arrived in the second half of June.

Common Quail	total pairs or singing males
England, SW	68
Avon	3
Devon	1
Dorset	1
Gloucestershire	6
Hampshire	8
Somerset	8
Wiltshire	41
England, SE	70
Bedfordshire	2
Berkshire	4
Buckinghamshire	7
Essex	3
Hertfordshire	9
Kent	25
Oxfordshire	5
Sussex	15
England, E	60
Cambridgeshire	12
Lincolnshire	11
Norfolk	19
Northamptonshire	4
Suffolk	14
England, C	21
Derbyshire	8
Leicestershire & Rutland	4
Shropshire	8

Common Quail *cont.*	total pairs or singing males	Scotland, S	28
		Ayrshire	1
		Borders	8
Staffordshire	1	Clyde	1
England, N	88	Dumfries & Galloway	6
Cheshire & Wirral	2	Lothian	12
Cleveland	5	Scotland, Mid	29
Cumbria	8	Angus & Dundee	11
Co. Durham	3	Moray & Nairn	3
Greater Manchester	2	North-east Scotland	7
Lancashire & N Merseyside	12	Perth & Kinross	6
Northumberland	6	Upper Forth	2
Yorkshire	50	Scotland, N & W	54
Wales	19	Argyll	5
Anglesey	2	Fair Isle	4
Caernarfonshire	2	Highland	26
Denbigh & Flint	5	Orkney	11
East Glamorgan	1	Outer Hebrides	3
Gower	1	Shetland	5
Montgomeryshire	2	Northern Ireland	2
Pembrokeshire	5	Co. Derry	2
Radnorshire	1	TOTAL	439

Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 208 lekking males **Coverage: moderate** **Red**

206 males at 64 leks. A total of 118 leks was monitored across five recording areas. For the fifth year running, no males were found at four traditional leks in Clyde. Of the remaining 114 leks, 64 were found to be active. The only area showing an increase in recent years is Speyside (Highland); counts in other areas are either very low or in decline.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn Seven active leks: 13 males. **North-east Scotland** Seven active leks: ten males. **Perth & Kinross** Two active leks: two males.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 48 active leks: 181 males. In the Abernethy Forest RSPB recording area, 25 males were counted at leks and the brood-count census located 18 females with a total of 20 chicks.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Less scarce: 1,255 bp (Dillon *et al.* 2009) **Coverage: low** **Green**

199 pairs. The limited information submitted in 2014 provided a total of only 199 confirmed and probable breeding pairs and tells us little about population trends over the last seven years, although records complement our database of breeding sites to help inform future surveys and support the conservation of the breeding areas. After an exceptionally poor 2013, productivity in most of the Shetland study areas was better. On Foula, for example, breeding success was the highest since monitoring began there. In Orkney, there was a similar story with six broods of two chicks (one chick is the norm). We are unable to provide accurate figures for most recording areas, and thus summarise only those records submitted away from the Northern Isles.

Scotland, S

Clyde Islands On Arran and Bute, at least two pairs bred and there were a further three probable and one possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn One possible breeding pair. **North-east Scotland** One pair bred and one possible breeding pair. **Perth & Kinross** Two possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Limited data received: **Argyll** At least five pairs bred, one probable and one possible breeding pairs. Four young fledged from five hatched. **Caithness** Four pairs bred, one probable and one possible breeding pairs. **Highland** At least 28 pairs bred, plus four probable breeding pairs. **Outer Hebrides** At least 17 pairs bred, four probable and three possible breeding pairs.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Rare: 217 bp (Dillon *et al.* 2009) **Coverage: low** **Amber**

23–49 pairs. It is disappointing that we are able to report on less than a quarter of the population. Most of the records received are of nests or broods, but visitors to the north and west of Scotland could make a significant contribution by reporting pairs seen on suitable breeding lochs, without causing disturbance.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire One pair bred, no young reared. **Dumfries & Galloway** One pair bred, fledging one young, and one probable breeding pair.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn One pair bred, eggs failed to hatch. **North-east Scotland** One pair bred, but failed as the nest site was flooded. **Perth & Kinross** One probable and ten possible breeding pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Five pairs bred, fledging four young in total; one probable and one possible breeding pair. Another seven traditional sites were not checked. **Caithness** One pair bred (one young), two probable and one possible breeding pairs. **Highland** 11 pairs bred, eight probable breeding pairs. **Outer Hebrides** Details received of only three pairs; of these, two pairs bred, one probable breeding pair.

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare: 5-yr mean 131 booming males **Coverage: near-complete** **Amber**

66 sites: 141–151 booming males, with at least 70 breeding attempts at 26 sites. The phenomenal success of the conservation programme for Eurasian Bittern, led by the RSPB/Natural England and co-funded by the European Union, has resulted in a reclassification of its conservation status. In 2014, the maximum number of booming males exceeded 150. RSPB's Simon Wotton provides some background to the story:

> The Bittern is a rare breeding species that was close to extinction in the UK in 1997, when only 11 booming males were recorded at seven sites, but it has responded well to a large-scale programme of habitat management and creation. There has been an annual survey of booming male Bitterns every year since 1990. In 2014, there was another encouraging increase, to a minimum of 141 boomers at 62 sites, compared with 120 at 60 sites in 2013.

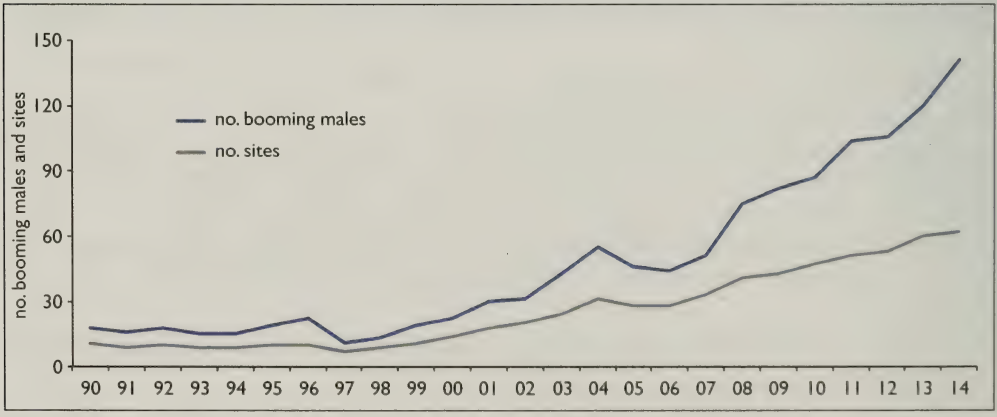


Fig. 3. The minimum number of booming male Eurasian Bitterns *Botaurus stellaris* in the UK and the number of occupied sites, 1990–2014.

Eurasian Bittern	no. sites	minimum no. booming males	maximum no. booming males	minimum no. nests	maximum no. nests
England, SW	10	46	50	20	23
Dorset	1	1	1	0	0
Somerset	9	45	49	20	23
England, SE	8	10	10	1	1
Bedfordshire	3	3	3	0	0
Kent	4	6	6	1	1
Sussex	1	1	1	0	0
England, E	36	69	71	38	39
Cambridgeshire	7	15	16	11	11
Lincolnshire	3	3	3	0	0
Norfolk	19	23	23	5	6
Suffolk	7	28	29	22	22
England, C	1	1	1	0	0
Nottinghamshire	1	1	1	0	0
England, N	10	15	18	11	11
Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	2	2	0	0
Northumberland	1	0	1	0	0
Yorkshire	7	13	15	11	11
Wales	1	0	1	0	0
Anglesey	1	0	1	0	0
TOTALS	66	141	151	70	74

These figures are based on the RSPB monitoring methodology; the minimum figure is the closest to the number of occupied territories. The minimum number of booming males is based on residency at a site for at least a week, while the maximum figure includes males booming for a shorter period only and cases where it was not possible to confirm that different males were involved.

Bitterns are continuing to increase in Somerset, with 45 booming males confirmed in 2014, mostly on Natural England, RSPB and Somerset Wildlife Trust reserves in the Avalon Marshes, up from 33 in 2013. Numbers in the Fens, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire have also continued to rise. For the first time, more booming males were recorded in the Fens than on the Suffolk coast, although most of the Suffolk coast reedbeds, except for Minsmere, were affected by saltwater inundation during storms in December 2013.

It was not possible to monitor all sites for nesting activity in 2014, which has been the case since the last full survey in 2011. From the sites monitored in 2014, there was confirmed or probable nesting at 26, with a minimum of 70 nests recorded. Even though not all sites were monitored, this is the highest recorded total since the start of the annual nest monitoring in 1994 (exceeding the 63 in 2011, when all sites with booming males were monitored for nesting activity). There were at least 20 nests in Somerset, mostly in the Avalon Marshes. Of the 17 nests found on the Suffolk coast, 12 were at Minsmere, the highest ever recorded there. Fifteen nests were recorded in the Fens, including 11 at two reedbeds that have been created for breeding Bitterns. The increase in nesting activity in Yorkshire is encouraging, with 11 nests recorded at six sites.

Major wetland habitat management, habitat restoration and creation are continuing and annual population monitoring is the main yardstick with which to measure their success. Some of the best places to see and hear Bitterns in the UK are now wetlands that were created for Bitterns and other wetland wildlife. One of the original objectives was to establish breeding populations away from coastal sites under threat of saltwater incursion, and this has proved successful. In 2014, 32% of the population was found on sites under threat of saline incursion, compared with 84% in 1999, and Somerset is now very much the most important county for breeding Bitterns. However, increases elsewhere, particularly in Cambridgeshire and Yorkshire, are encouraging for future population growth. Given the colonisation of newly created sites and recolonisation of historical sites, the proportion of

Bitterns in the six SPAs classified for breeding Bitterns has declined since the 1990s, when these SPAs held 90% of the UK population in 1999. The six SPAs held 39 booming males in 2014 (28% of the population).

It is now possible to achieve a full national survey each year only with help from volunteers, landowners and conservation site staff, so many thanks should go to all who help to monitor this flagship wetland bird. Birdwatchers can help by reporting booming birds (with dates) to county recorders so that the information can be collated by the RBBP.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 2 bp

Two sites: 0–5 pairs. There was no evidence of breeding in 2014. The extensive period when calls were heard in Somerset suggests that the males were unmated. However, another male was found at a suitable site in northern England, so there are tentative signs that this species may yet become established in the UK.

England, SW

Somerset One site: four barking males heard between 18th April and 27th July.

England, N

Northumberland One site: one barking male heard between 22nd and 27th June.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Occasional breeder; last bred in 2008

One site: 0–1 pairs. A single bird in suitable habitat in spring was also reported from Somerset where it lingered for a month. These are the first records to appear in this report since 2010; breeding was proven only in 2008 (Somerset) but may also have occurred there in 2009.

England, SW

Gloucestershire One site: two birds in breeding plumage were present from 27th July to 3rd August and were seen mating.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 865 bp **Coverage: moderate** Green

114 sites: 1,025–1,033 pairs. Despite the fact that some known colonies are not counted every year, and that some new colonies may be going unreported, there was a notable increase in the numbers of breeding Little Egrets in 2014 and the first report of over 1,000 pairs. This follows an apparent levelling off since 2007 (fig. 4), which may have been at least partly due to the effects of colder winters in 2009/10 and 2010/11. The initial increase, a period of stability and then further increase is matched by the WeBS trends for Little Egret (Frost *et al.* 2016). The species has been placed on the Amber list since first breeding in the UK, but the population growth and range expansion have resulted in reclassification to the Green list.

Six counties reported their first breeding records in 2014: Bedfordshire, Denbigh & Flint, Isle of Wight, Lancashire & N Merseyside, Northumberland and Radnorshire.

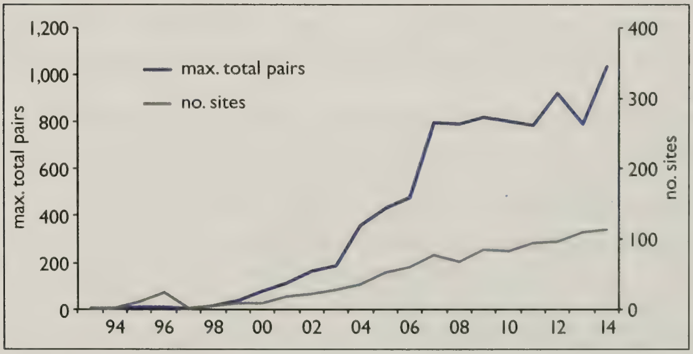


Fig. 4. The number of breeding sites and the maximum total number of pairs of Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* in the UK, 1993–2014.

Ben Green

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

There are still no records of confirmed breeding in Scotland, but the presence of a pair with three young seen close to the Solway on 8th June 2014 (Collin 2015) hints that breeding may have taken place in Dumfries & Galloway in 2014, given the distance to the nearest known colonies (over 100 km). Owing to the lack of certainty about the origins of these birds, however, they are not included in the totals.

Little Egret	no. sites	confirmed and probable breeding pairs
England, SW	**31**	**213+**
Avon	1	1
Cornwall	2*	9+
Devon	7*	50+
Dorset	1	3
Gloucestershire	3	11
Hampshire	7	63
Isle of Wight	1	1
Somerset	6	43
Wiltshire	3	32
England, SE	**31**	**267**
Bedfordshire	1	1
Berkshire	1	3
Buckinghamshire	4	16
Essex	5	56
Hertfordshire	4	12
Kent	6	141
Oxfordshire	1	2
Sussex	9	36
England, E	**23**	**315**
Cambridgeshire	3	70
Lincolnshire	6	84
Norfolk	6	96
Northamptonshire	1	1
Suffolk	7	64
England, C	**3**	**18**
Leicestershire & Rutland	2	8
Nottinghamshire	1	10
England, N	**6**	**70**
Cheshire & Wirral	1	54
Cumbria	2	9
Lancs & N Merseyside	1	5
Northumberland	1	1
Yorkshire	1	1
Wales	**13**	**107**
Anglesey	3	17
Caernarfonshire	4	46
Carmarthenshire	1	10
Denbigh & Flint	1	1
Gower	2	15
Gwent	1	17
Radnorshire	1	1
Northern Ireland	2	6
Co. Down	2	6
Channel Islands	5	37
Guernsey	1	20
Jersey	4	17
TOTALS	114	1,033

* Colonies occupied but at least one in the county was not counted.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

New colonist

Two sites: 2–4 pairs bred. Breeding in Somerset has now occurred for three consecutive years.

England, SW

Somerset One site: two pairs bred successfully (five young fledged); one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one possible breeding pair. A pair in breeding plumage was present from 12th April to 18th May. Elsewhere in the county, a male was seen displaying and carrying sticks in a heronry in autumn 2014.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

New colonist

One site: 0–1 pairs bred. Glossy Ibis has not previously featured in our reports, yet with the northwards expansion of other related species, and large numbers in Britain & Ireland in recent years (particularly in the 2013/14 winter; White & Kehoe 2016a), it was perhaps not surprising that a breeding attempt was made. The pair chose their site late in the season, however, and nothing more came of it. Long-staying summering birds were also reported from Greater Manchester, Kent and Perth & Kinross.

England, E

Lincolnshire One site: one probable breeding pair. A bird present from 14th June was joined by a second on 26th; over the next four days the pair was seen displaying and building a nest platform, but no eggs were laid.

Ben Green

Glossy Ibises *Plegadis falcinellus*

Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 11 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Amber

One site: 15–17 pairs bred. The colony in Norfolk continues to grow, up from ten pairs in 2013.

England, E

Norfolk One site (Holkham): 15 pairs bred, fledging 30–34 young; two probable breeding pairs (displaying and nest-building but no eggs laid).

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 27 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Red**

15 sites: 23 pairs bred. The population remains at a low ebb and for the first time in at least 50 years no nesting attempt was made in Moray & Nairn. Last year's report included a review of the changing status of the Slavonian Grebe and since then it has been moved from the Amber to the Red list (Eaton *et al.* 2015) and numbers in SPAs continue to decline.

Although we might look for local reasons for the low numbers of breeding Slavonian Grebes in Scotland, declines have occurred over a much wider area, to the extent that the species is now classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Global Red List (BirdLife International 2016). The North American population has declined by 75.9% over 40 years (Butcher & Niven 2007), and the European population by nearly 30% in just over 20 years (BirdLife International 2015). Globally the main threats are thought to be human disturbance, forestry operations around breeding lakes, fluctuating water levels and fish stocking (BirdLife International 2016).

Scotland, N & W

Highland 15 sites: 23 pairs bred, 37 young fledged. At the main site, Loch Ruthven, seven pairs fledged 14 young.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Rare: 5-yr mean 52 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Amber**

21 sites: 35–63 pairs. After a steady overall decline in both the number of breeding sites and the number of pairs, 2014 saw a reversal in fortunes, with the highest number of each since 2005 and 2004 respectively (fig. 5). Perhaps the calm and settled weather in spring 2014 led to the establishment of more breeding pairs? The record of a pair in Scotland is an interesting development following a complete lack of reports in that country between 2009 and 2013.

England, SE

Hertfordshire Two sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging one young; 12 probable breeding pairs; (2) one pair bred, fledging one young. **Kent** Two sites: (1) one pair bred, seen feeding one large juvenile in August; (2) one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging one young; (2) one probable breeding pair. **Lincolnshire** Two sites: (1) five pairs bred, one probable breeding pair; (2) one possible breeding pair.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One site: four pairs bred; three pairs were successful and fledged six young.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: 11 pairs bred, fledging 15 young. **Northumberland** Three sites: (1) three pairs bred, fledging seven young; (2) one pair bred, nest abandoned and no young fledged; (3) one possible breeding pair. **Yorkshire** Seven sites: (1) four pairs bred, 23 young fledged (some may have been from second broods); one possible breeding pair; (2) three pairs bred, with six young seen; (3) two probable and one possible breeding pairs; (4) one probable and two possible breeding pairs; (5)–(7) one possible breeding pair at each site.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross One site: one probable breeding pair.

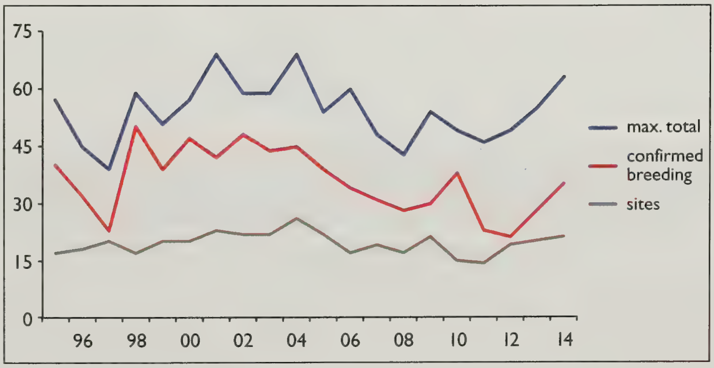


Fig. 5. Breeding Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* in the UK, 1995–2014: number of breeding sites, confirmed breeding pairs and maximum total number of pairs.

Honey-buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 41 bp **Coverage: moderate** Amber

25–39 pairs; at least 27 young fledged. To give a more complete picture of distribution and potential numbers we have noted records of territories apparently occupied by single birds, but these are not included in the totals. It is likely that there were more pairs in Wales than listed, since survey effort away from the Glamorgan area was limited in 2014.

England, SW

Dorset One pair bred but failed when the young were very small; elsewhere a territory was occupied by a single bird only. **Hampshire** Nine pairs bred, fledging at least 11 young; two probable breeding pairs. **Somerset** One possible breeding pair, based on a record of juveniles calling in August. **Wiltshire** One pair bred, fledging two young; one probable breeding pair and one further territory occupied by a single bird.

England, SE

Kent One pair bred successfully; two possible breeding pairs. **Surrey** Two pairs bred, fledging four young. **Sussex** Three pairs bred, fledging five young; one probable breeding pair.

England, E

Norfolk One possible breeding pair and one single bird.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One pair bred successfully, number fledged unknown. **Shropshire** A single bird only.

England, N

Cumbria Two probable and one possible breeding pairs. **Yorkshire** Two pairs bred, fledging two young.

Wales

East Glamorgan/Gower One pair bred, failing on eggs when the nest collapsed, but fledging one young from a second attempt; one probable breeding pair and one single bird. **Wales (elsewhere)** One pair bred.

Scotland, S

Dumfries & Galloway Two pairs bred, fledging two young; two probable breeding pairs.

Scotland, Mid

Moray & Nairn A single bird only. **Perth & Kinross** One pair bred, number fledged unknown. **Upper Forth** A single bird only.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare: 5-yr mean 71 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Red

82–97 pairs; 63 young fledged. A large increase in Highland (from 21 pairs in 2013) and three breeding pairs from the east Scotland scheme contributed to another positive step in the re-establishment of White-tailed Eagles in Scotland.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee One pair bred, but the eggs failed to hatch. **Fife** One pair bred, fledging one young. **Perth & Kinross** One pair bred, but the eggs failed to hatch.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 29 pairs bred, one further territorial pair; at least 21 young fledged. **Highland** 30 pairs bred, with a further nine territorial pairs; at least 20 young fledged. **Orkney** One territorial pair. **Outer Hebrides** 20 pairs bred, four other territorial pairs; at least 21 young fledged.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 341 bp **Coverage: moderate** Amber

263–358 breeding females/pairs; some of the 'pairs' detailed below refer to polygynous males paired with more than one female. This annual status review suggests a stable population but we believe that not all territories are being reported from core parts of the range between Kent and Lincolnshire. In part, this is because some pairs in these areas nest in reed-filled ditches or arable crops and are easily overlooked. However, 2014 saw an expansion in southwest England, with twice as many pairs as in 2013 and the first confirmed breeding for both Cornwall and the Isle of Wight. There were also single birds lingering in parts of northern England, Wales and southern Scotland where they are yet to breed.

England, SW

Cornwall One pair bred. **Dorset** Four pairs bred. **Isle of Wight** One pair bred, but young in nest lost, probably predated. **Somerset** Six pairs bred, two probable and two possible breeding pairs.

England, SE

Bedfordshire One probable breeding pair. **Essex** Six pairs bred, seven probable breeding pairs (almost certainly under-recorded). **Kent** 24 pairs bred, eight probable and three possible breeding pairs; previous atlas work suggests 80–100 pairs in the county. **Sussex** Two pairs bred; three probable breeding pairs.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 19 pairs bred, six probable and four possible breeding pairs. **Lincolnshire** 33 pairs bred; 17 probable breeding pairs. **Norfolk** A minimum of 45 pairs bred; 20 probable breeding pairs (coverage thought to be incomplete). **Suffolk** 60 pairs bred; one possible breeding pair.

England, C

Nottinghamshire One pair bred and two possible breeding pairs.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral Three pairs bred, one possible breeding pair. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Five pairs bred, one possible breeding pair. **Northumberland** One pair bred. **Yorkshire** 26 pairs bred, two probable and six possible breeding pairs.

Wales

Anglesey One pair bred.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee One pair bred, two possible breeding pairs. **Fife** Two pairs bred. **North-east Scotland** One possible breeding pair. **Perth & Kinross** Four pairs bred, two probable breeding pairs.

Channel Islands

Jersey 13 pairs bred; three probable breeding pairs. **Guernsey** Five pairs bred, one probable breeding pair.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce: 662 bp (Hayhow et *al.* 2013) **Coverage: moderate** **Red**

268–393 monitored pairs. A new survey of breeding Hen Harriers in the UK and Isle of Man was undertaken in 2016. There has been widespread anger and concern among the birdwatching community in recent years about the continuing illegal persecution and disturbance of breeding Hen Harriers, which in some parts of the range has a major impact on the number of pairs nesting.

Hen Harrier	confirmed breeding pairs	territories occupied by pairs
England, C & N	4	7
Wales	21	30
Breconshire	0	1
Caernarfonshire	1	4
Ceredigion	0	1
Denbigh & Flint	3	4
Meirionnydd	13	13
Montgomeryshire	2	2
Radnorshire	2	5
Scotland, S	57	68
Ayrshire	8	9
Borders	4	4
Clyde	10	12
Clyde Islands	19	23
Dumfries & Galloway	16	20
Scotland, Mid	26	36
Moray & Nairn	5	8
Perth & Kinross	21	28
Scotland, N & W	135	210
Argyll	34	44
Caithness	1	2
Highland	17	22
Orkney	50	105
Outer Hebrides	33	37
Northern Ireland	22	38
Co. Antrim	4	11
Co. Derry	3	4
Co. Fermanagh	10	16
Co. Tyrone	5	7
Isle of Man	3	4
TOTALS	268	393

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 12 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Amber

Ten sites: 10–11 pairs fledged 19 young. An improvement in productivity saw the highest number of young fledged since 2009. A successful pair in Yorkshire was the first in that county since 2010 but the location was in farmland rather than moorland as previously. There was also a sky-dancing female elsewhere in northern England and although she was observed with nesting material, no male was seen in the area. Single birds were also recorded in potential breeding habitat elsewhere in eastern England and southern Scotland.

England, S

Six sites: five pairs bred, 13 young fledged (three broods of four and one of one); one possible breeding pair and at least three non-breeding birds.

England, E

Lincolnshire One site: one pair bred, young predated two days after hatching. **Norfolk** Two sites: three pairs bred, five young fledged.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: one pair bred, one young fledged.

Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 505 bp **Coverage: moderate** Green

Northern Goshawk	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	**107**	**119**
Cornwall	5	5
Devon	20	22
Gloucestershire	26	27
Hampshire	39	39
Somerset	0	3
Wiltshire	17	23
England, SE	**0**	**5**
Surrey	0	2
Sussex	0	3
England, E	**17**	**17**
Norfolk	10	10
Suffolk	7	7
England, C	**51**	**69**
Derbyshire	13	16
Herefordshire	7	14
Nottinghamshire	8	8
Shropshire	17	23
Staffordshire	1	1
Warwickshire	0	0
Worcestershire	5	7
England, N	**53**	**82**
Cheshire & Wirral	0	1
Cleveland	0	1
Cumbria	2	2
Co. Durham	0	3
Greater Manchester	0	0
Lancashire & N Merseyside	0	2
Northumberland	26	32
Yorkshire	25	41
Wales	**68**	**163**
Breconshire	9	19
Caernarfonshire	0	5
Carmarthenshire	2	4
Ceredigion	0	10
Denbigh & Flint	2	3
East Glamorgan	2	29
Gower	1	11
Gwent	22	22
Meirionnydd	6	14
Montgomeryshire	10	10
Pembrokeshire	2	5
Radnorshire	12	31
Scotland, S	**53**	**61**
Ayrshire	3	4
Borders	18	24
Clyde	2	2
Dumfries & Galloway	30	30
Lothian	0	1
Scotland, Mid	**73**	**83**
Angus & Dundee	6	6
Moray & Nairn	4	6
North-east Scotland	56	64
Perth & Kinross	3	3
Upper Forth	4	4
Scotland, N & W	**4**	**11**
Highland	4	11
Northern Ireland	**2**	**12**
Co. Antrim	0	2
Co. Armagh	0	2
Co. Derry	1	2
Co. Down	0	2
Co. Fermanagh	0	1
Co. Tyrone	1	3
TOTALS	**428**	**622**

428–622 pairs. This is the first time we have reported over 600 pairs of Goshawks. The key areas of increase are southwest England, Wales, parts of central and northern Scotland and Northern Ireland, but in some of these areas the increase reflects improved reporting.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Scarce: 442 bp (Eaton et *al.* 2007) **Coverage: moderate** **Green**

198–330 pairs. A continued increase in the number of young fledged, from 128 in 2013 to 140 in 2014, is based on a similar number of egg-laying pairs. Golden Eagle is now Green-listed, but its recategorisation (from Amber) is mainly due to a change in the status of the whole European population rather than in the Scottish one (see Eaton *et al.* 2015).

Golden Eagle	singles [1]	probable breeding pairs [2]	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs	min. no. young fledged
England, N	1	0	0	0	0
Borders	0	1	0	1	0
Clyde	0	1	1	2	1
Clyde Islands	0	0	5	5	3
Dumfries & Galloway	0	0	2	2	0
Angus & Dundee	1	0	5	5	7
Moray & Nairn	0	0	0	0	0
North-east Scotland	3	8	8	16	8
Perth & Kinross	0	8	17	25	14
Upper Forth	1	2	5	7	5
Argyll	1	34	39	73	20
Caithness	0	0	0	0	0
Highland	14	64	90	154	67
Outer Hebrides	2	14	26	40	15
TOTALS	23	132	198	330	140

[1] Total includes home ranges occupied by single birds or showing signs of occupation but no pair seen.
[2] May include some pairs that laid eggs but failed early, and pairs on territory that were not fully monitored, so evidence of egg-laying was not available. Total also includes immature pairs.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare: 5-yr mean 218 bp **Coverage: moderate** **Amber**

203–237 pairs. A minimum of 378 young fledged. This is the first time in over a century that the number of known breeding pairs in the UK has exceeded 200. The large number of young raised, also a record, may fuel further increase and expansion in the population in the years ahead. One area to watch may be Wales, where more single birds than previously were reported, potentially prospecting in suitable breeding areas.

England, E

Northamptonshire One pair bred, fledging one young; two possible breeding pairs.

England, C

Leicestershire & Rutland Six pairs bred, fledging 11 young.

England, N

Cumbria Six pairs bred, fledging at least ten young; two other territorial pairs. **Northumberland** Three pairs bred, fledging eight young.

Wales

Anglesey One pair summered. **Meirionnydd** Two pairs bred, fledging six young; one territorial pair and four other single birds occupying nest platforms. **Montgomeryshire** Two pairs bred, fledging four young.

Scotland, S

Ayrshire Two pairs bred, fledging four young; one territorial pair. **Borders** Eight pairs bred, fledging 12 young; one other territorial pair. **Clyde** Ten pairs bred, fledging 14 young; four other territorial pairs. **Clyde Islands** One pair bred, fledging one young. **Dumfries & Galloway** Six pairs bred, fledging 12 young; four other territorial pairs. **Lothian** One pair bred but again failed before the eggs hatched.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee Nine pairs bred, fledging 15 young. **Moray & Nairn** Nine pairs bred, fledging 23 young; two other territorial pairs. **North-east Scotland** 18 pairs bred, fledging 36 young; three other territorial pairs. **Perth & Kinross** 31 pairs bred, fledging 46 young; three other territorial pairs. **Upper Forth** 12 pairs bred, fledging 23 young; four other territorial pairs.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 16 pairs bred, fledging 33 young; two other territorial pairs. **Caithness** Two pairs bred, fledging three young; one other territorial pair. **Highland** 58 pairs bred, fledging 116 young; three other territorial pairs.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean: 1,312 bp **Coverage: moderate** **Green**

At least 426 sites: min. 1,166 territories, 130 confirmed breeding pairs. Some recorders provided estimates of what are believed to be more realistic numbers of Water Rail territories in their counties based either on specific surveys or, more often, their experience of local sites and numbers reported in recent years. Without exception these estimates were several times higher than the numbers recorded in a single year. It would be useful to compile such estimates for all counties, to better understand the status of this widespread but unobtrusive breeder.

Water Rail	sites	territories
England, SW	**34**	**131**
Avon	5	43
Cornwall	0	0
Devon	6	6
Dorset	6	8
Gloucestershire	3	3
Hampshire	8	10
Isle of Wight	2	5
Somerset	4	56
Wiltshire	0	0
England, SE	**65**	**110**
Bedfordshire	3	5
Berkshire	3	4
Buckinghamshire	3	3
Essex	12	16
Greater London	0	0
Hertfordshire	5	12
Kent	18	18
Oxfordshire	2	6
Surrey	8	11
Sussex	11	35
England, E	**59**	**360**
Cambridgeshire	23	46
Lincolnshire	6	47
Norfolk	10	16
Northamptonshire	4	4
Suffolk	16	247
England, C	**16**	**65**
Derbyshire	3	4
Leicestershire & Rutland	1	4
Nottinghamshire	0	0
Shropshire	1	1
Staffordshire	5	44
Warwickshire	0	0
West Midlands	1	1
Worcestershire	5	11
England, N	**95**	**215**
Cheshire & Wirral	16	33
Cleveland	1	13
Cumbria	6	12
Co. Durham	8	10
Greater Manchester	19	44
Lancashire & N Merseyside	3	3
Northumberland	14	15
Yorkshire	28	85
Wales	**38**	**61**
Anglesey	3	12
Breconshire	4	4
Caernarfonshire	3	3
Carmarthenshire	1	1
Ceredigion	1	3
Denbigh & Flint	4	8
East Glamorgan	5	5
Gower	6	6
Gwent	1	3
Montgomeryshire	2	2
Pembrokeshire	1	1
Radnorshire	7	13
Scotland, S	**49**	**131**
Ayrshire	0	0
Borders	32	108
Clyde	8	14
Dumfries & Galloway	6	6
Lothian	3	3
Scotland, Mid	**17**	**27**
Angus & Dundee	3	5

Water Rail *cont.*	sites	territories
Fife	2	2
Moray & Nairn	1	5
North-east Scotland	6	9
Perth & Kinross	5	6
Scotland, N & W	42	52
Argyll	23	28
Caithness	3	5
Highland	7	8
Orkney	7	9
Outer Hebrides	2	2
Northern Ireland	7	9
Co. Antrim	2	2
Co. Armagh	2	2
Co. Derry	1	1
Co. Fermanagh	1	3
Co. Tyrone	1	1
Isle of Man	1	1
Channel Islands	3	4
Jersey	3	4
TOTALS	426	1,166

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 28 singing males **Coverage: moderate** Amber

32 sites: 1–51 pairs/singing males. All records refer to calling males unless stated otherwise; all records are included here, regardless of how long the birds were heard for. The adults and chicks at the Cheshire & Wirral breeding site were regularly visible from a hide.

Favourable weather conditions in spring 2014 may have contributed to the high numbers reported, although factors affecting yearly variation in abundance may be complex. A recent study of Spotted Crakes in Denmark (Fox *et al.* 2014) showed a consistent bimodal pattern of singing, with peaks in April/May and June/July; the relative size of the second peak in particular varied between years. Radio-telemetry work established that early breeding birds were still present but silent during the second peak in calling activity; this, and the occupancy of different territories suggests that the second peak involved new, late-arriving birds, mainly in July and possibly from other areas where they may have attempted to breed earlier in the season.

England, SW

Dorset One site: one, 5th–6th June. **Hampshire** One site: one, 27th April and 5th May. **Somerset** Two sites (1) five birds; (2) four birds.

England, SE

Kent One site: two, 15th April to 5th May. **Oxfordshire** One site: one, 27th April to 15th May.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Four sites: (1) Ouse Washes: three; (2) Nene Washes: two; (3) one, 10th–18th May; (4) one, 23rd–24th July. **Norfolk** One site: one, 29th April to 14th May. **Suffolk** One site: one, 30th April to at least 22nd May.

England, C

Shropshire One site: one, 28th–29th April.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral One site: one from 12th May to 20th June then two adults with two young from 27th July to 4th August. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** One site: two, 25th and 27th June.

Wales

Anglesey One site: one, 30th July. **Breconshire** One site: one, 23rd–24th May.

Scotland, S

Clyde Two sites: two calling birds, no further details.

Scotland, Mid

Angus & Dundee One site: up to three from 13th June to 3rd July. **Perth & Kinross** One site: one, 18th June. **Upper Forth** One site: one, 15th–19th May.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll Four sites: (1) one, 7th May to 16th June; (2) one, 16th and 19th June; (3) one, 24th May; (4) one, 30th June. **Caithness** Two sites: (1) three on 10th June, four on 25th June; (2) one, 5th June. **Highland** Three sites: (1) three territories, no further details; (2) one 15th May and several days subsequently; (3) one, 23rd May. **Outer Hebrides** One site: one, 25th–28th May.

Baillon's Crake *Zapornia pusilla*
Potential breeder

One site: 0–1 pairs/singing males. There have been two previous records of singing Baillon's Crakes in Kent (in 1999 and 2001), both of which remained for longer than the 2014 bird. The unprecedented numbers in 2012 (Ausden *et al.* 2013) have not been repeated.

England, SE
Kent One site: one singing on 22nd–23rd May.

Corn Crake *Crex crex*
Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,225 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Red

1,333 singing males. After a marked decline in 2013, attributed to an exceptionally cold spring that inhibited vegetation growth, numbers recovered in 2014. A full survey in 2014, coordinated by the RSPB (Wotton *et al.* 2015), revealed a new record total since Corn Crake was added to the RBBP list, in 1986. Targeted conservation efforts in the core range are seemingly behind the increase, which was most apparent in Argyll. As well as the potential problems of a cold spring, another cause for concern is the lack of increasing numbers on the UK mainland.

England, E
Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) Nene Washes, 22; (2) two in June and July. **Lincolnshire** One site: one, 10th–14th July.
England, N
Cleveland One site: one, 31st May to 7th June. **Yorkshire** Two sites: (1) four; (2) one, 29th June to 3rd July.
Wales
Meirionnydd One site: one, 16th July.
Scotland, N & W
Argyll Total 706: Coll 91, Colonsay & Oronsay 86, Gigha 1, Iona 28, Islay 98, Mull 3, Staffa 1, Tiree 396, Treshnish Isles 2. **Caithness** Total one. **Highland** Total 54: Canna 1, Eigg 1, Mainland 14, Muck 0, Skye 38. **Orkney** Total 36. **Outer Hebrides** Total 499: Barra & Vatersay 103, Benbecula 31, Berneray 3, Harris 10, Lewis 140, Mingulay and other islands south of Vatersay 4, North Uist 120, South Uist 88. **Shetland** Total three.
Northern Ireland
Co. Antrim Two sites: two.

Common Crane *Grus grus*
Very rare: 5-yr mean 21 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Amber

Nine extensive sites: 21–26 pairs, 11 young fledged. Helped by the addition of four breeding pairs from the re-establishment scheme in southwest England, there was a new peak in the number of confirmed breeding pairs, up from 15 in 2013. Away from the southwest, most of the nesting sites are the same as those used in previous years, emphasising that birds are highly site faithful. Cranes which appear to be paired but not associated with a particular site are classed as non-breeding pairs; as well as the eight noted below, three other non-breeding pairs were reported, from Gwent, Perth & Kinross and Shropshire.

England, SW
Gloucestershire One site: two pairs bred (one pair hatched two young but they were predated; the other pair failed at the egg stage), and one non-breeding pair. **Somerset** One site: two pairs bred, both failed at the egg stage; at least two non-breeding pairs.
England, E
Cambridgeshire Two extensive sites: (1) two pairs bred, with one successful pair fledging two young; one possible breeding pair and a further non-breeding pair; (2) one pair bred, young thought to have been predated. **Norfolk** One extensive site (Norfolk Broads): nine pairs bred, six pairs successful with eight young fledged; also two probable and one possible breeding pairs, with a further two non-breeding pairs in the county. **Suffolk** One site (Lakenheath): two pairs bred, each hatching two young, but none fledged. One non-breeding pair elsewhere in the county.

England, N

Yorkshire One extensive site: two pairs bred, hatching two young each, but none fledged. One non-breeding pair elsewhere in the county.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland: Two sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging one young from two that hatched; (2) one probable breeding pair.

Great Bustard *Otis tarda*

Reintroduced population first bred in 2007

One extensive site: four pairs. The small reintroduced breeding population was again unsuccessful, with all eggs laid being either infertile or predated.

England, SW

Wiltshire One site: at least four females laid eggs but no chicks hatched.

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 391 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Amber

Eight counties: 318–411 pairs fledged a minimum of 199 young. The number of young fledged in 2014 was the highest since 2011. Previously we have reported only confirmed breeding pairs but a reduction in professional recording effort means that the progress of some pairs cannot be followed throughout the breeding attempt; the maximum total number of pairs thus combines probable breeding pairs with estimates for areas covered less thoroughly, which gives a better indication of the population size each year.

Stone-curlew	confirmed breeding pairs	max. total pairs	min. no. young fledged
England, SW	106	129	79
Hampshire	24	31	24
Wiltshire	82	98	55
England, SE	8	9	7
Berkshire	5	5	5
Oxfordshire	2	3	2
Sussex	1	1	0
England, E	204	273	113
Cambridgeshire	1	1	0
Norfolk	107	151	67
Suffolk	96	121	46
TOTALS	318	411	199

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Occasional breeder

Four sites: three pairs. More detail of the remarkable events of 2014, when an arrival of Black-winged Stilts into southern England in April led to four breeding attempts, two of which were successful, is provided by Ausden *et al.* (in press). The interval between the pair in Cambridgeshire deserting the site there (by 21st May) and the discovery in July of a brood of four in Suffolk suggests that only one pair was involved. The breeding records were the first for all four counties concerned, although a pair was seen copulating and building a nest scrape in Suffolk in 2005.

England, E

Cambridgeshire One site: one pair bred, laying one egg that was predated the next day; the pair then disappeared and is assumed to have relaid in Suffolk. **Suffolk** One site: one pair bred, fledging four young.

John Whitting

290. Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* family, Cliffe Pools RSPB reserve, Kent, June 2014.

England, SE

Kent One site: one pair bred, hatching four young; none fledged (assumed predated). **Sussex** One site: one pair bred, fledging three young.

Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,736 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Amber**

At least 100 sites: 1,637 pairs. There was little evidence of further range expansion in 2014, although a few new small colonies were noted, especially in northeast England. The table below is a cautious treatment of potential duplicates: some pairs nest at one site then move to another site if the first attempt fails, and where possible these pairs are included in the table only once. We repeat our plea that all breeding colonies should be reported, with a date of the count and a six-figure grid reference of the site.

Avocet	no. sites	minimum no. confirmed breeding pairs
England, SW	4	40
Gloucestershire	1	5
Hampshire	3	35
England, SE	25	413
Essex	13	133
Kent	9	226
Sussex	3	54
England, E	40	906
Cambridgeshire	3	23
Lincolnshire	11	210
Norfolk	19	519
Suffolk	7	154
England, C	4	20
Leicestershire & Rutland	1	3
Nottinghamshire	1	2
Worcestershire	2	15
England, N	26	220
Cheshire & Wirral	2	24
Cleveland	3	6
Co. Durham	1	4
Lancashire & N Merseyside	6	91
Northumberland	5	9
Yorkshire	9	86
Wales	1	38
Gwent	1	38
TOTALS	100	1,637

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce: 423 breeding males (Hayhow *et al.* 2015a) **Coverage: low** **Red**

In 2014, data were received relating to just 25 confirmed and probable breeding pairs in the main Scottish range, in **Highland, North-east Scotland** and **Perth & Kinross**. Records of birds in potential breeding habitat were also received from **Angus & Dundee** and **Argyll**. Hayhow *et al.* (2015a) gave an estimate of 423 breeding males in the UK in 2011, a decline of 43% since 1999, which led to the Dotterel moving from Amber to Red in BoCC4.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 609 bp **Coverage: moderate** Green

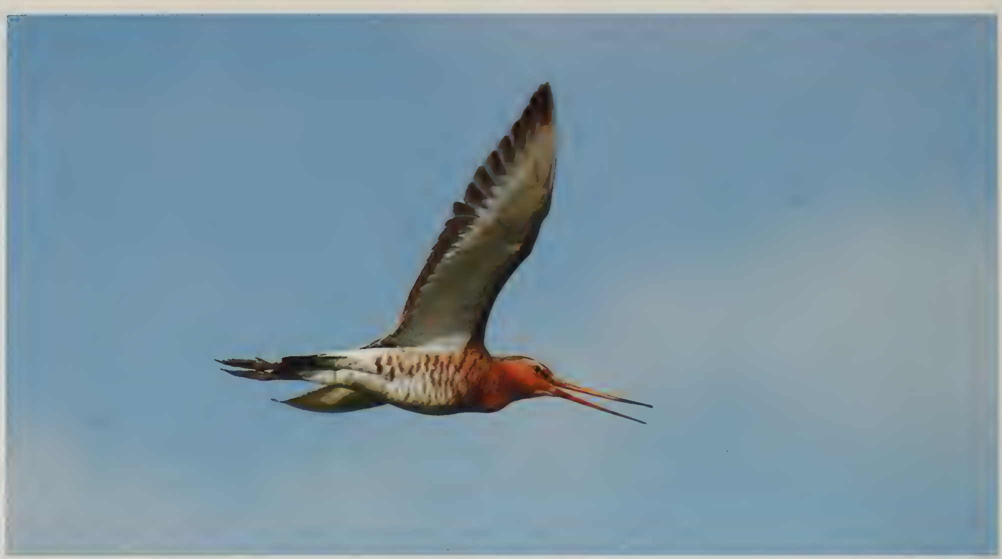
575 pairs. The table below shows only confirmed and probable breeding pairs; a further 70 possible breeding pairs may have been passage birds or those using sites only temporarily. Little Ringed Plovers nest mainly among river shingles or in sand-/gravel-pits – these habitats are subject to frequent changes or loss, so the breeding population is mobile and pairs may be overlooked at new sites. The 5-year mean of 609 is a little over half that estimated in the 2007 national survey (1,115 pairs; Conway *et al.* 2008).

Little Ringed Plover	confirmed and probable breeding pairs
England, SW	**38**
Devon	1
Dorset	4
Gloucestershire	10
Hampshire	8
Isle of Wight	1
Somerset	3
Wiltshire	11
England, SE	**84**
Bedfordshire	8
Berkshire	12
Buckinghamshire	5
Essex	9
Greater London	3
Hertfordshire	8
Kent	11
Oxfordshire	7
Surrey	6
Sussex	15
England, E	**77**
Cambridgeshire	15
Lincolnshire	23
Norfolk	30
Northamptonshire	3
Suffolk	6
England, C	**80**
Derbyshire	21
Herefordshire	6
Leicestershire & Rutland	2
Nottinghamshire	14
Shropshire	5
Staffordshire	14
Warwickshire	5
West Midlands	5
Worcestershire	8
England, N	**213**
Cheshire & Wirral	22
Cleveland	8
Cumbria	9
Co. Durham	13
Greater Manchester	17
Lancashire & N Merseyside	56
Northumberland	8
Yorkshire	80
Wales	**58**
Breconshire	8
Carmarthenshire	24
Denbigh & Flint	1
East Glamorgan	4
Gower	4
Gwent	4
Meirionnydd	4
Montgomeryshire	5
Radnorshire	4
Scotland, S	**11**
Borders	2
Clyde	7
Dumfries & Galloway	2
Scotland, Mid	**14**
Angus & Dundee	4
Fife	4
Moray & Nairn	1
North-east Scotland	3
Perth & Kinross	2
TOTAL	575

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Scarce: 290+ bp (Jackson 2009) **Coverage: low** Red

The Whimbrel is one of the most poorly monitored bird species on the RBBP list: the 1–3 apparently occupied territories (in Orkney and Shetland) reported in 2014 is barely 1% of the estimated population (Jackson 2009). Balmer *et al.* (2013) showed that it is widespread in Shetland, with an increase in range since previous atlases, but declines have been noted on Fetlar, Unst and Yell. Given that this species is Red-listed, our knowledge of its numbers is particularly poor. We urge birders, especially in Shetland, to submit *all* records of birds in potential breeding habitat to the county recorder.



James Kennerley

291. Displaying Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa l. limosa*, Nene Washes, Cambridgeshire, April 2014.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Rare: 5-yr mean 57 bp **Coverage: near-complete** 🟥 Red

13 sites: 46–50 pairs fledged at least five young. There was a further reduction in the number of confirmed breeding pairs, although a greater number of sites where at least display was recorded. Productivity of the *limosa* population was extremely low. Over the previous decade the main site at the Nene Washes has produced fewer than ten young on three other occasions: four in 2006, none in 2011 and 2012. Researchers are investigating the causes of annual variation in productivity at this site, and potential remedies.

L. l. limosa

Six sites: 41–43 pairs fledged four young.

England, SW
One site: one pair bred, no young fledged.
England, SE
Kent One site: one probable breeding pair (display recorded).
England, E
Cambridgeshire One site (Nene Washes): 37 pairs bred, three young fledged. **Norfolk** One site (Welney): two pairs bred, no data on productivity.
England, N
Lancashire & N Merseyside One site: one pair bred, four eggs hatched, one young fledged. **Yorkshire** One site: one probable breeding pair (displaying in April and May).

L. l. islandica

Seven sites: 5–7 pairs fledged at least one young.

Scotland, N & W
Orkney Four sites: three pairs bred, at least one young fledged and perhaps a second pair also had young; one probable breeding pair. **Shetland** Three sites: two pairs bred – one failed, outcome of second unknown; one probable breeding pair.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 8 females **Coverage: high** 🟥 Red

Three sites: 0–5 breeding females. Lekking and copulating birds are recorded most years in early spring (typically April) at passage sites, such as in the Cambridgeshire Fens; such birds, present for only a few days, are excluded from this analysis. It is conceivable that females at the leks in Lancashire and Yorkshire may have remained to nest, but there was no evidence of that. Only females recorded beyond mid May are included in the totals.

England, SE
Kent One site: one probable breeding pair. A male and female remained through April and May but there was no further evidence of a breeding attempt.
England, N
Lancashire & N Merseyside Two sites: (1) 33 males and five females at a lek on 22nd April, 12 males and three females on 29th April, some remaining to 2nd May at least; (2) one male and three females attending a lek on 13th June and into July. **Yorkshire** One site: up to 22 males and 13 females at leks from mid March to mid May with three males and one female still attending a lek on 11th May.
Scotland, N & W
Outer Hebrides One site: one female present from at least 30th May to 3rd June. Lekking involving up to four birds occurred briefly elsewhere in the county in late May.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 1 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Amber**

One site: two pairs. This is one of the UK's rarest and most vulnerable breeding birds, with just one or two pairs reported in most years, all at the same regular site. Evidence of young has been recorded in ten of the last 20 years; 2011 was the only year in that period when none was found in breeding habitat.

Scotland, N
One site: two pairs bred, both seen with broods of chicks.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 38 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Red**

Nine sites: 27–46 breeding pairs/males. The total of 39 on Shetland was the best since 40 in 1996 and the overall total of 46 males the highest since the RBBP's inception in 1973. As well as the following, a female returned to a potential breeding site in **North-east Scotland** between 25th May and 28th June.

Scotland, N & W
Argyll Two sites: two males of which at least one bred; up to four females. **Outer Hebrides** Two sites: five males of which at least four bred; up to eight females. **Shetland** Five extensive sites: 39 males, of which at least 22 bred.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp **Coverage: high** **Amber**

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. A thorough survey, checking all former and potential breeding sites in the traditional area, located just two pairs with no evidence of confirmed breeding. Breeding was last proven in 2011; the 5–6 pairs in that year represent the best annual total since regular breeding recommenced in Scotland, in 1999.

Scotland, N & W
Highland Two sites: one probable and one possible breeding pair.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Less scarce: 1,080 bp (Hancock *et al.* 1997) **Coverage: low** **Amber**

28–111 pairs. Fewer pairs were reported than in 2013; data were received for a minimum of 111 pairs, with at least 28 pairs confirmed breeding. Records came from six areas: **Argyll** (2 pairs), **Caithness** (14), **Highland** (58), **Outer Hebrides** (34), **Perth & Kinross** (1) and **Shetland** (2).

The Greenshank moved from Green to Amber in the BoCC4 review, based on the localised nature of the breeding population. This species is inadequately covered by current recording, and numbers and population trends since the last full survey (Hancock *et al.* 1997) are uncertain. We urge birders visiting the Scottish Highlands to report all records of Greenshank in breeding habitat, with a six-figure grid reference of the location. There is great scope for individual studies in different parts of the range, and with a sufficient sample size it may be possible to improve on the current knowledge.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 25 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Amber**

12 sites: 3–23 pairs. Over the last five years, at least 25 sites in the north of Scotland have held breeding or singing Wood Sandpipers, but around ten traditional sites were occupied in most or all of those years.

Scotland, N & W

Caithness Four sites: one pair bred, three probable breeding pairs. **Highland** Eight sites: two pairs bred, 12 probable and five possible breeding pairs.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Scarce: 2,136 bp (Mitchell et *al.* 2004) **Coverage: low/moderate** **Red**

179 apparently occupied territories (AOTs). At least 57 young fledged, the highest number since Arctic Skua was added to the RBBP list in 2010, prompted by steep declines in breeding populations and its inclusion on the Red List in BoCC3 (Eaton *et al.* 2009). Since then, the mean number of AOTs reported is just 244, although coverage of Orkney and Shetland is known to be incomplete.

Scotland, N & W

Caithness Seven sites: seven pairs bred plus a further eight AOTs. **Fair Isle** 22 pairs bred plus a further eight AOTs, 14 young fledged. **Highland** Two sites: (1) Handa, 15 pairs fledged 13 young; (2) one AOT. **Orkney** 59 AOTs counted from six sites (not a full survey); 22 young fledged. **Outer Hebrides** Three sites: (1) St Kilda, two pairs fledged two young; (2) one pair bred; (3) one AOT. **Shetland** 55 AOTs counted from 14 sites. At four sites where productivity data were available, six young fledged. The largest colony was on Foula: 24 AOTs, including 21 pairs that laid eggs; fewer pairs than in 2013 but in 2014 some young fledged.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,548 bp **Coverage: high** **Amber**

64 sites: 1,521 pairs. At least 733 young fledged, but several of the largest colonies in East Anglia failed, which is a cause for conservation concern. Traditional colonies are well known and attempts to count all those in England, Wales and the Isle of Man are made each year. Most Scottish colonies are also checked annually, the main exception being the small and mobile colonies in the Outer Hebrides. In 2014, a survey of the breeding waders of the machair of North Uist, South Uist and Benbecula also counted nesting Little Terns, but that did not give complete

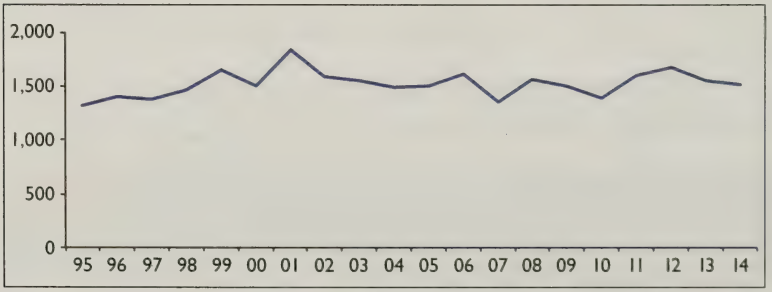


Fig. 6. Confirmed breeding pairs of Little Terns *Sternula albifrons* in the UK, 1995–2014.

coverage. The small colony in Orkney appears to have been deserted in 2014.

Since Little Tern was added to the RBBP list in 1995, the numbers reported have been remarkably stable (fig. 6). In 2014, a five-year project began, funded by the EU LIFE+ scheme with 11 partner organisations and covering 29 colonies (about 65% of the total population) in England and Wales. This aims to: increase the total population of Little Terns through better management of existing breeding sites and the creation/restoration of new or recently abandoned sites; improve knowledge of Little Tern demography to inform long-term conservation strategies; and involve local communities to raise awareness and support for the species.

Little Tern	no. sites	confirmed breeding pairs	min. young fledged
England, SW	3	74	98
Dorset	1	33	60
Hampshire	2	41	38
England, SE	7	83	25
Essex	2	45	10
Kent	1	6	n/a
Sussex	4	32	15
England, E	15	773	160
Lincolnshire	1	20	26
Norfolk	10	722	114
Suffolk	4	31	20
England, N	7	205	240
Cleveland	1	64	92
Cumbria	3	39	0
Northumberland	2	57	88
Yorkshire	1	45	60
Wales	1	136	77
Denbigh & Flint	1	136	77
Scotland, S	1	1	0
Lothian	1	1	0
Scotland, Mid	3	44	74
Moray & Nairn	2	2	0
North-east Scotland	1	42	74
Scotland, N & W	26	155	42
Argyll	6	66	42
Caithness	1	5	n/a
Highland	2	8	n/a
Outer Hebrides	17	76	n/a
Isle of Man	1	50	17
TOTALS	64	1,521	733

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Rare: 5-yr mean 82 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Red**

Four sites: 96 pairs plus two mixed pairs. A total of 102 young (including one hybrid) probably fledged. Two mixed pairs, of Roseate and Common Terns *S. hirundo*, have been recorded in every year since 2009. Hybridisation between these two species seems to occur more frequently than among other terns, perhaps partly as a result of the unbalanced sex ratio in Roseate Terns, with more females than males (Cabot & Nisbet 2013). Becker & Ludwigs (2004) showed that up to 0.2% of apparent Roseate Terns in the USA are in fact Roseate × Common Tern hybrids. Roseate Terns in northeastern North America almost always nest in colonies with Common Terns.

England, N

Northumberland One site (Coquet Island): 93 pairs raised at least 98 large young.

Wales

Anglesey One site: two mixed pairs bred; each pair hatched two eggs, one young fledged. As in 2013, both Roseate Terns were paired with Common Terns.

Scotland, S

Lothian One site: one pair bred, one large chick at nest site in July.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: two pairs bred, probably fledging two young.

Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Occasional breeder

Two sites: 0–2 pairs. Both records indicate that breeding may have occurred in Scotland in 2014. Although recently fledged Little Gulls were recorded in Angus & Dundee in 1988 and 1991 (Spencer *et al.* 1990; Ogilvie *et al.* 1994), it is not known where they nested. There have been five reports of confirmed breeding by Little Gulls in England, the most recent in 2007 (Holling *et al.* 2010) but no young have ever been recorded in England.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one probable breeding pair. Two adults present in May and June were seen displaying, with mating reported on 13th June. **Perth & Kinross** One site: one possible breeding pair. An adult persistently mobbed a ringer visiting a Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* colony but no nest was found.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 922 bp **Coverage: moderate** Amber

41 sites: 779–791 pairs. The reports from Cambridgeshire and Carmarthenshire were the first successful breeding records of Mediterranean Gulls in those counties.

England, SW

Dorset One site: an estimated 80+ pairs bred (the colony is difficult to view and no accurate count was made). **Hampshire** Five sites: (1)–(2) 104 pairs fledged 40 young; (3)–(5) 40 pairs fledged seven young.

England, SE

Essex Two sites: (1)–(2) four pairs bred. It is likely that some colonies were not reported although we are not aware of any large colonies. **Kent** Five sites: (1) 273 pairs bred, 72 young seen in late June; (2) 80 pairs bred; (3) 57 pairs bred, 58 young seen in late June; (4)–(5) nine pairs bred. **Sussex** Three sites: (1) 18 pairs fledged ten young; (2) one pair bred, no young fledged; (3) one possible breeding pair.

England, E

Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) one pair bred, fledging two young; (2) one probable breeding pair. **Lincolnshire** One site: one pair bred (no young fledged), one probable breeding pair. **Norfolk** Three sites: (1) 26 pairs bred; (2)–(3) 13 pairs fledged six young. **Suffolk** One site: one probable breeding pair.

England, C

Shropshire One site: one possible breeding pair. **Staffordshire** Two sites: (1) one pair bred, no young fledged; (2) one pair bred, outcome unknown.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. **Cumbria** One site: one probable and two possible breeding pairs. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Two sites: (1) 47 pairs fledged 24 young; (2) two pairs fledged one young. **Northumberland** One site: four pairs fledged two young. **Yorkshire** Four sites: (1)–(4) five pairs bred (one young fledged), one probable breeding pair.

Wales

Anglesey One site: four pairs fledged two young. **Carmarthenshire** One site: one pair fledged one young.

Northern Ireland

Co. Antrim One site: six pairs bred, outcome unknown. **Co. Down** One site: one pair bred. **Co. Fermanagh** One site: one probable breeding pair: male Mediterranean Gull paired with a Common Gull *L. canus* defended a nest site but it is not known whether eggs were laid.

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Amber

Three sites: two pairs, one mixed pair. One pair again nested in Dorset, fledging young successfully, as in every year but one since 2007. A pair also bred in Hampshire; all previous nesting attempts in that county have involved mixed pairs.

England, SW
Dorset One site: one pair bred, one young fledged. **Hampshire** One site: one pair bred, three young fledged.
England, N
Yorkshire One site: one possible breeding mixed pair. A male paired with a female Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* for the second year running but they did not nest.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Less scarce: 1,800–6,000 bp (Musgrove *et al.* 2013) **Coverage: low** Green

251–367 pairs. Compared with 2013, higher numbers of breeding Long-eared Owls, and of broods of fledged young, were reported from all regions except north and west Scotland, which may reflect 2014 being a good year for voles, the main prey species.

Long-eared Owl	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	3	10
Avon	0	1
Hampshire	2	2
Isle of Wight	0	6
Somerset	1	1
England, SE	9	12
Bedfordshire	1	1
Essex	1	1
Kent	6	9
Sussex	1	1
England, E	16	21
Cambridgeshire	7	10
Lincolnshire	4	4
Norfolk	1	2
Northamptonshire	1	1
Suffolk	3	4
England, C	30	36
Derbyshire	16	16
Nottinghamshire	10	16
Staffordshire	4	4
England, N	90	146
Cheshire & Wirral	2	2
Cleveland	0	3
Cumbria	5	8
Co. Durham	8	30
Greater Manchester	14	18
Lancashire & N Merseyside	7	7
Northumberland	8	17
Yorkshire	46	61
Wales	7	25
Denbigh & Flint	1	3
East Glamorgan	0	2
Gwent	0	11
Montgomeryshire	2	3
Radnorshire	4	6
Scotland, S	31	36
Borders	12	15
Clyde	4	5
Clyde Islands	1	2
Dumfries & Galloway	1	1
Lothian	13	13
Scotland, Mid	22	24
Angus & Dundee	5	5
Fife	3	3
Moray & Nairn	1	2
North-east Scotland	10	10
Upper Forth	3	4
Scotland, N & W	19	26
Argyll	3	3
Caithness	4	6
Highland	11	14
Orkney	1	2
Outer Hebrides	0	1
Northern Ireland	10	17
Co. Antrim	3	6
Co. Derry	2	4
Co. Down	5	6
Co. Fermanagh	0	1
Channel Islands	14	14
Guernsey	6	6
Jersey	8	8
TOTALS	251	367

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Scarce: 620–2,180 bp (Musgrove *et al.* 2013) Coverage: unknown

Amber

145–285 pairs. As for the previous species, there was an increase in the number of breeding Short-eared Owls in 2014, with all northern areas posting higher totals than in 2013. The extent to which this species is under-recorded is uncertain but could be considerable. Compared with the number of occupied 10-km squares in the last breeding atlas (Balmer *et al.* 2013), we receive relatively few breeding records from the islands in the west of Scotland, the hills along the south-east flank of the Scottish highlands, and from the Pennines.

Short-eared Owl	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SE	0	1
Kent	0	1
England, C	8	11
Derbyshire	6	9
Staffordshire	2	2
England, N	42	65
Cumbria	23	25
Co. Durham	5	13
Lancashire & N Merseyside	7	8
Yorkshire	7	19
Wales	9	15
Denbigh & Flint	0	1
East Glamorgan	0	1
Meirionnydd	1	4
Montgomeryshire	0	1
Pembrokeshire	3	3
Radnorshire	5	5
Scotland, S	25	45
Ayrshire	0	3
Borders	5	11
Clyde	1	6
Clyde Islands	12	12
Dumfries & Galloway	7	13
Scotland, Mid	17	32
Angus & Dundee	1	1
Moray & Nairn	0	1
North-east Scotland	0	5
Perth & Kinross	15	21
Upper Forth	1	4
Scotland, N & W	43	114
Argyll	6	6
Caithness	1	7
Highland	4	7
Orkney	20	57
Outer Hebrides	12	37
Northern Ireland	1	1
Co. Antrim	1	1
Isle of Man	0	1
TOTALS	145	285

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Occasional breeder

Richard Johnson

European Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster*

One site: two pairs. This is only the fourth breeding attempt in the RBBP era, following others in 2002, 2005 and 2006. Of these, only the 2002 attempt (at Bishop Middleham, in Co. Durham) was successful. Discovered late in the season, the 2014 record is all the more remarkable because it involved two pairs, both of which successfully fledged young, perhaps helped by the warm, dry conditions in July (*Brit. Birds* 107: 502).

England, SW
Isle of Wight One site: two pairs bred, nine young fledged.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp **Coverage: moderate** **Former breeder**

One site: 0–1 pairs. With the last report of confirmed breeding in 2002 (Holling *et al.* 2012), BoCC4 classed Wryneck as a former breeder. Since then there has been at least one bird recorded in breeding habitat in every year except 2006, but no indication of any nesting attempt.

Scotland, N & W
Highland One site: one singing male, present from 20th May to 11th June.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dryobates minor*

Less scarce: 1,000–2,000 bp (Musgrove et *al.* 2013) **Coverage: low** **Red**

67–300 pairs. The figures here represent just a fraction of the population in England and Wales. Although declining in both numbers and range (Balmer *et al.* 2013), this species is elusive for most of the year and dedicated fieldwork is required to establish numbers. Such a study in Hampshire produced 23% of the total number of pairs and half of all confirmed breeding records in 2014.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	36	102
Devon	1	5
Dorset	0	2
Gloucestershire	0	12
Hampshire	34	68
Somerset	1	10
Wiltshire	0	5
England, SE	14	75
Bedfordshire	0	5
Berkshire	0	5
Buckinghamshire	0	4
Essex	2	4
Greater London	0	4
Hertfordshire	3	7
Kent	7	23
Oxfordshire	0	3
Surrey	2	13
Sussex	0	7
England, E	2	16
Cambridgeshire	0	3
Lincolnshire	1	6
Norfolk	1	2
Northamptonshire	0	1
Suffolk	0	4
England, C	6	48
Derbyshire	0	3
Herefordshire	0	8
Leicestershire & Rutland	0	1
Nottinghamshire	0	10
Shropshire	1	2
Staffordshire	2	5
Warwickshire	0	5
West Midlands	0	4
Worcestershire	3	10
England, N	4	36
Cheshire & Wirral	2	7
Co. Durham	0	2
Greater Manchester	0	1
Lancashire & N Merseyside	0	4
Yorkshire	2	22
Wales	5	23
Breconshire	0	2
Carmarthenshire	0	2
Ceredigion	0	6
East Glamorgan	0	3
Meirionnydd	0	2
Montgomeryshire	0	1
Pembrokeshire	0	1
Radnorshire	5	6
TOTALS	67	300

Ben Green

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Less scarce: 1,160 bp (Ewing *et al.* 2011) Coverage: moderate

Red

279–377 pairs monitored. Merlin has now been placed on the Red list (from Amber) owing to a faltering recovery from historical decline, and based on the results of the latest national survey (Ewing *et al.* 2011). The annual monitoring reported by the RBBP is based largely on the same study areas each year but these cover only about 25% of the estimated UK total.

Merlin	confirmed breeding pairs	territories occupied
England, C	12	14
Derbyshire	10	11
Shropshire	1	2
Staffordshire	1	1
England, N	91	127
Cumbria	12	12
Co. Durham	37	40
Lancashire & N Merseyside	6	16
Northumberland	17	20
Yorkshire	19	39
Wales	14	25
Breconshire	2	4
Caernarfonshire	0	3
Carmarthenshire	0	1
Ceredigion	1	1
Meirionnydd	5	8
Montgomeryshire	1	1
Radnorshire	5	7
Scotland, S	31	36
Borders	9	12
Clyde	9	10
Dumfries & Galloway	10	10
Lothian	3	4
Scotland, Mid	63	77
Angus & Dundee	9	12
Moray & Nairn	16	16
North-east Scotland	31	33
Perth & Kinross	7	16
Scotland, N & W	58	83
Argyll	1	3
Caithness	0	3
Highland	22	33
Orkney	8	11
Outer Hebrides	10	16
Shetland	17	17
Northern Ireland	10	15
Co. Antrim	4	7
Co. Derry	4	6
Co. Tyrone	2	2
TOTALS	279	377

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 956 bp **Coverage: low** **Green**

240–716 pairs. Clements *et al.* (2016) made a compelling case for the size of the UK's Hobby population being considerably more than we are able to report based (mainly) on the returns from county recorders. Using data from the recent atlas (Balmer *et al.* 2013) and their own intensive studies, they argued that 3,000 breeding pairs may be a more reasonable estimate for the UK. The Hobby is difficult to detect at breeding sites leading to under-recording, and further local studies such as those described in Clements *et al.* (2016) would provide the foundation for more accurate county population estimates.

Hobby	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	**57**	**182**
Avon	7	11
Cornwall	4	8
Devon	13	13
Dorset	3	25
Gloucestershire	4	7
Hampshire	11	30
Isle of Wight	0	3
Somerset	5	24
Wiltshire	10	61
England, SE	**27**	**157**
Bedfordshire	3	3
Berkshire	0	6
Buckinghamshire	1	2
Essex	1	2
Greater London	5	8
Hertfordshire	2	45
Kent	2	40
Oxfordshire	0	15
Surrey	10	16
Sussex	3	20
England, E	**55**	**148**
Cambridgeshire	6	12
Lincolnshire	5	80
Norfolk	2	4
Northamptonshire	24	32
Suffolk	18	20
England, C	**59**	**118**
Derbyshire	31	38
Herefordshire	4	6
Leicestershire & Rutland	2	19
Nottinghamshire	10	10
Shropshire	9	11
Staffordshire	2	12
Warwickshire	0	1
West Midlands	0	2
Worcestershire	1	19
England, N	**22**	**70**
Cheshire & Wirral	8	25
Co. Durham	0	2
Greater Manchester	1	2
Lancashire & N Merseyside	2	7
Northumberland	0	1
Yorkshire	11	33
Wales	**18**	**38**
Breconshire	6	13
Carmarthenshire	0	1
Denbigh & Flint	1	1
East Glamorgan	1	2
Gower	0	2
Gwent	2	2
Meirionnydd	0	1
Montgomeryshire	1	4
Radnorshire	7	12
Scotland, S	**0**	**1**
Dumfries & Galloway	0	1
Scotland, Mid	**2**	**2**
Angus & Dundee	1	1
Perth & Kinross	1	1
TOTALS	240	716

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Less scarce: 1,701 pairs (Wilson *et al.* in prep.) **Coverage: high** **Green**

1,701 pairs. The sixth UK breeding survey of Peregrine Falcons was carried out in 2014, providing a new estimate of 1,694 pairs in the UK and the Isle of Man, with an additional seven pairs in the Channel Islands. Full survey results will be published by Wilson *et al.* (in prep.) and Mark Wilson of the BTO provides a summary of the results below.

> Since the last national survey, in 2002, there has been a marked variation in the population trends in different parts of the UK, with decreases in Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man, and increases in England and Northern Ireland. Broadly speaking, numbers in upland areas have

decreased and those in many lowland and coastal areas have been stable or increased. The factors responsible for this pattern include changes in the number and availability of prey and the impact of illegal persecution in some areas.

Previous national surveys focused exclusively on known breeding sites, presenting estimates of the number of pairs occupying those sites for different regions (see Banks *et al.* 2010). In each region, the occupancy at visited sites was assumed representative of known sites for which no information was reported. Population estimates thus comprised the observed number of breeding pairs, plus an estimated number of pairs at unsurveyed sites.

Graeme Willetts

292. Juvenile Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, Cornwall, July 2014.

The 2014 survey followed a similar approach in traditional breeding areas of the UK, but to account for birds colonising new areas, where many nest sites might be still undiscovered, surveys were also carried out in randomly selected 5 km x 5 km squares. The data from these surveys was used particularly in areas where Peregrines were rare or historically absent. Overall population estimates from the 2014 survey are therefore larger than observed numbers of breeding pairs, to take account of pairs occupying known sites that were not visited but also pairs occupying unknown sites in areas (particularly in parts of England) that have been colonised only recently.

The table below gives the total number of pairs actually counted in each recording area and is based on data from sites visited as part of the national survey and other counts submitted to RBBP. The country totals were computed using additional information from sites not visited and from the random-square survey.

Peregrine Falcon	total pairs
England, SW	**239**
Avon	10
Cornwall	52
Devon	87
Dorset	32
Gloucestershire	19
Hampshire	14
Isle of Wight	6
Isles of Scilly	3
Somerset	11
Wiltshire	5
England, SE	**57**
Bedfordshire	2
Berkshire	4
Buckinghamshire	1
Essex	5
Greater London	8
Hertfordshire	3
Kent	11
Oxfordshire	3
Surrey	9
Sussex	11
England, E	**40**
Cambridgeshire	4
Lincolnshire	26
Norfolk	3
Northamptonshire	1
Suffolk	6
England, C	**103**
Derbyshire	30
Herefordshire	6
Leicestershire & Rutland	12
Nottinghamshire	13
Shropshire	21
Staffordshire	7
Warwickshire	3
West Midlands	6
Worcestershire	5
England, N	**179**
Cheshire & Wirral	9
Cleveland	3
Cumbria	63
Co. Durham	6
Greater Manchester	12
Lancashire & N Merseyside	16
Northumberland	19
Yorkshire	51
Wales	**209**
Anglesey	8
Breconshire	14
Caernarfonshire	22
Carmarthenshire	8
Ceredigion	12
Denbigh & Flint	17
East Glamorgan	30
Gower	7
Gwent	6
Meirionnydd	15
Montgomeryshire	19
Pembrokeshire	37
Radnorshire	14
Scotland, S	**177**
Ayrshire	33
Borders	29
Clyde	23
Clyde Islands	8
Dumfries & Galloway	61
Lothian	23
Scotland, Mid	**130**
Angus & Dundee	23
Fife	12
Isle of May	1
Moray & Nairn	8
North-east Scotland	40
Perth & Kinross	27
Upper Forth	19
Scotland, N & W	**97**
Argyll	34
Caithness	6
Fair Isle	1
Highland	30
Orkney	15
Outer Hebrides	9
Shetland	2
Northern Ireland	**84**
Co. Antrim	32
Co. Armagh	4
Co. Derry	11
Co. Down	13
Co. Fermanagh	13
Co. Tyrone	11
Isle of Man	15
Channel Islands	7
TOTALS	1,337

	estimated no. breeding pairs in 2002 (Banks *et al.* 2010)	estimated no. breeding pairs in 2014 (Wilson *et al.* in prep.)	% change
England	470	854	82
Wales	283	249	-12
Scotland	571	472	-17
Northern Ireland	82	96	17
Isle of Man	31	23	-26
TOTALS	1,437	1,694	18

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Red

Two sites: 0–1 pairs. There were no records of Golden Oriole in 2014 at Lakenheath, in Suffolk, the last known breeding site in Britain. The single record below suggests that a breeding attempt may have been made at a new site; the last confirmed breeding record in the UK was in 2009.

England, E

Norfolk One site: one probable breeding pair. A pair, found at a suitable breeding wood on 20th May, was present until at least 11th June; no further evidence of breeding was obtained.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 4 bp **Coverage: moderate** Red

Eight sites: 1–4 pairs plus four single birds in potential breeding habitat in midsummer. Davies & Lock (2016) reviewed the status of Red-backed Shrike as a breeding species in the UK and suggested ways of managing habitats for this species in the future. It is clear from the records in 2014 that Red-backed Shrikes can turn up almost anywhere and breeding may occur but, apart from the recent run of success in Devon, and before that in south Wales, it is unusual for pairs of Red-backed Shrikes to return to the same site to breed from one year to the next. The site used by the successful pair in Moray & Nairn in 2013 was checked, but no birds returned. Red-backed Shrikes are late passage birds but we have included records from potential breeding habitat away from the coast in June and July. Birders should be aware that such birds may attempt to breed and should be cautious about sharing the information. Davies & Lock outlined measures to help protect birds that may be making a nesting attempt.

England, SW

Cornwall One site: one possible breeding pair. A singing male was recorded in suitable breeding habitat on 11th June; ten days later, a female was found less than 5 km away. **Devon** One site: one female returned to the site where breeding had occurred in the previous four years. **Hampshire** One site: one female remained at a suitable breeding site from 15th June to 5th July.

England, E

Norfolk One site: a singing male was present from 28th June until at least 2nd September; a female was also seen in the area on 29th June but the birds were not seen together.

Wales

Pembrokeshire One site: one female only, ringed on 2nd June at an inland location.

Scotland, Mid

North-east Scotland One site: one male recorded on 5th July only.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one pair bred: a male was recorded feeding two young in late July. In addition, a female was present in early June about 10 km away, possibly one of the same pair. **Shetland** One site: one probable breeding pair. A pair on territory in early June had started nest-building, but the attempt was abandoned after the birds were disturbed unintentionally.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Scarce: 393 pairs (Hayhow *et al.* in prep.) **Coverage: near-complete** Green

393–471 pairs. A full survey in 2014 was the first for 12 years, and the results are presented below. Although still relatively scarce and restricted in range, the Red-billed Chough is now Green-listed owing to a change in status of the European population (see Eaton *et al.* 2015).

Daniel Hayhow of the RSPB provided this update on the RSPB/Natural Resources Wales 2014 Chough Survey:

> The 2014 Chough Survey provided an estimate of 393 pairs in the UK and the Isle of Man. This suggests that the Chough population has remained largely stable since the last national survey, in 2002, but with some regional changes in the intervening years.

Richard Johnson

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

The population estimate based on a two-visit survey methodology was 393 confirmed and probable breeding pairs; the estimate rises to 471 pairs if records of possible breeding evidence are included. This compares with the 2002 estimate of 399 and 488 pairs respectively. As in previous surveys, the majority of the population in 2014 was found in Wales (55%) and the Isle of Man (30%).

Choughs have declined in some areas since 2002. On Islay, the estimate is down by 18% since the last national survey, reflecting the decline reported from annual monitoring in recent years. Typically, Choughs do not breed until their third or fourth year, so population trends may be affected by the survival rates of the pre-breeding element of the population. The well-studied population on Islay has shown declines in the survival of pre-breeders and this has been linked to changes in prey abundance and availability (Reid *et al.* 2008). In north and mid Wales, counts show a drop of 7%, but overall the population in Wales shows no substantial change (a 1% increase) since 2002, owing to small increases in Pembrokeshire and Gower. No breeding Choughs were found on Jura (Argyll), along the Galloway coast (Dumfries & Galloway) or in Montgomery, all areas that formerly held breeding pairs.

On the Isle of Man, the population increased to 118 confirmed and probable breeding pairs in 2014 (from 114 in 2002). However, further work in 2015 (covering areas not surveyed in 2014) gave a revised estimate for the island (not included in the table below) of 134 confirmed and probable pairs (161 pairs including possible breeding evidence). These additional data suggest that the population may have increased by as much as 17% since 2002.

In England, the Cornish population has increased from one pair in 2002 to seven in 2014. A large number of volunteers monitor known sites annually; in 2014 almost all suitable habitat was surveyed for any undiscovered pairs, but no new pairs were found.

The table below shows the total of confirmed and probable breeding pairs combined, to allow future compatibility with the 2014 survey results.

Red-billed Chough	confirmed and probable breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	7	9
Cornwall	7	9
Wales	214	258
Anglesey	35	40
Caernarfonshire	77	89
Ceredigion	21	28
Denbigh & Flint	2	2
East Glamorgan	1	1
Gower	3	7
Meirionnydd	17	17
Pembrokeshire	58	74
Scotland, N & W	53	63
Argyll: Colonsay & Oronsay	7	9
Argyll: Islay	46	54
Northern Ireland	1	1
Co. Antrim	1	1
Isle of Man	118	140
TOTALS	393	471

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 832 bp **Coverage: moderate** **Green**

1,151 territories or singing males. This is the first time that we have reported over 1,000 territories. This is not unexpected, since this species is clearly increasing in numbers if not yet in range, and it was Green-listed in BoCC4. There were no reports from some Welsh counties this year, despite being looked for, but we suspect that in its main range the Firecrest is under-recorded. The high total in Hampshire was due to dedicated survey work – notably in the New Forest, which revealed 531 territories there – but fieldworkers believe that the county population may be as high as 1,500 territories (M. Ward pers. comm.).

Firecrest	singing males/ territories
England, SW	819
Avon	3
Cornwall	2
Devon	16
Dorset	10
Gloucestershire	35
Hampshire	693
Somerset	22
Wiltshire	38
England, SE	239
Bedfordshire	1
Berkshire	72
Buckinghamshire	18
Hertfordshire	6
Kent	4
Oxfordshire	10
Surrey	55
Sussex	73
England, E	68
Norfolk	34
Suffolk	34
England, C	2
Warwickshire	1
Worcestershire	1
Wales	15
Gwent	15
Channel Islands	8
Guernsey	7
Jersey	1
TOTAL	1,151

Willow Tit *Poecile montana*

Less scarce: 3,400 bp (Musgrove *et al.* 2013) **Coverage: moderate** **Red**

163–676 pairs. There are parts of Britain where, in 2014, Willow Tits were reported in autumn/winter but not in the breeding season (March to July), suggesting that there may be undiscovered breeding populations in such areas. To improve monitoring of this rapidly declining species (down by 77% since 1995; Harris *et al.* 2016) it is essential that *all* records are submitted, to county recorders or via BirdTrack. In future reports we hope to include results from new local studies, which are improving knowledge of Willow Tit status in important refuges. Such studies have been helped by the development of better survey methods, based on playback of vocalisations.

Willow Tit	confirmed breeding pairs	total pairs
England, SW	**6**	**63**
Cornwall	0	4
Devon	2	15
Gloucestershire	0	11
Hampshire	0	27
Wiltshire	4	6
England, SE	**0**	**5**
Berkshire	0	3
Oxfordshire	0	2
England, E	**13**	**52**
Lincolnshire	7	28
Norfolk	6	22
Northamptonshire	0	2
England, C	**25**	**130**
Derbyshire	12	41
Leicestershire & Rutland	1	10
Nottinghamshire	3	30
Shropshire	1	4
Staffordshire	7	31
Warwickshire	0	8
West Midlands	1	6
England, N	**90**	**307**
Cheshire & Wirral	13	28
Cleveland	1	5
Cumbria	0	3
Co. Durham	15	50
Greater Manchester	26	60
Lancashire & N Merseyside	0	20
Northumberland	2	16
Yorkshire	33	125
Wales	**12**	**77**
Breconshire	2	9
Ceredigion	0	3
Denbigh & Flint	1	4
East Glamorgan	0	11
Gwent	0	1
Meirionnydd	0	2
Montgomeryshire	1	25
Pembrokeshire	1	4
Radnorshire	7	18
Scotland, S	**17**	**42**
Ayrshire	0	1
Dumfries & Galloway	17	41
TOTALS	163	676

Bearded Tit *Panurus biarmicus*

Scarce: 5-yr mean 609 bp **Coverage: moderate** **Green**

At least 70 sites: a minimum of 772 pairs. This is the highest total reported since Bearded Tit was added to the Panel's list in 1995. In recent years records have tended to come from the same counties and mostly the same sites; the species is limited by the availability of reedbeds, although its propensity to explore new areas in autumn should help it to colonise new sites as they become available. Malzer & West (2015) reviewed the status of the Bearded Tit and issues associated with its conservation, and the results of an 18-year study into the use of reed nestboxes by the Leighton Moss (Lancashire & N Merseyside) population have recently been published (Wilson 2015).

Bearded Tit	minimum no. sites	confirmed and probable breeding pairs
England, SW	**10**	**73**
Dorset	5	24
Hampshire	3	10
Somerset	2	39
England, SE	**21**	**105**
Bedfordshire	2	2
Essex	4	20
Kent	11	73
Sussex	4	10
England, E	**29**	**251**
Cambridgeshire	3	31
Lincolnshire	3	27
Norfolk	15	85
Suffolk	8	108
England, N	**5**	**140**
Lancashire & N Merseyside	1	24
Yorkshire	4	116
Wales	**1**	**6**
Gwent	1	6
Scotland, Mid	**3**	**196**
North-east Scotland	1	1
Perth & Kinross	1	194
Upper Forth	1	1
Channel Islands	**1**	**1**
Jersey	1	1
TOTALS	70	772

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. Although the Short-toed Lark is a regular scarce migrant in the UK (see, for example, White & Kehoe 2016b), this is the first time that it has appeared in the RBBP reports.

Scotland, N & W

Outer Hebrides One site: a singing male, apparently holding territory, from 20th May to 10th June.

Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean 1,622 bp **Coverage: moderate** **Green**

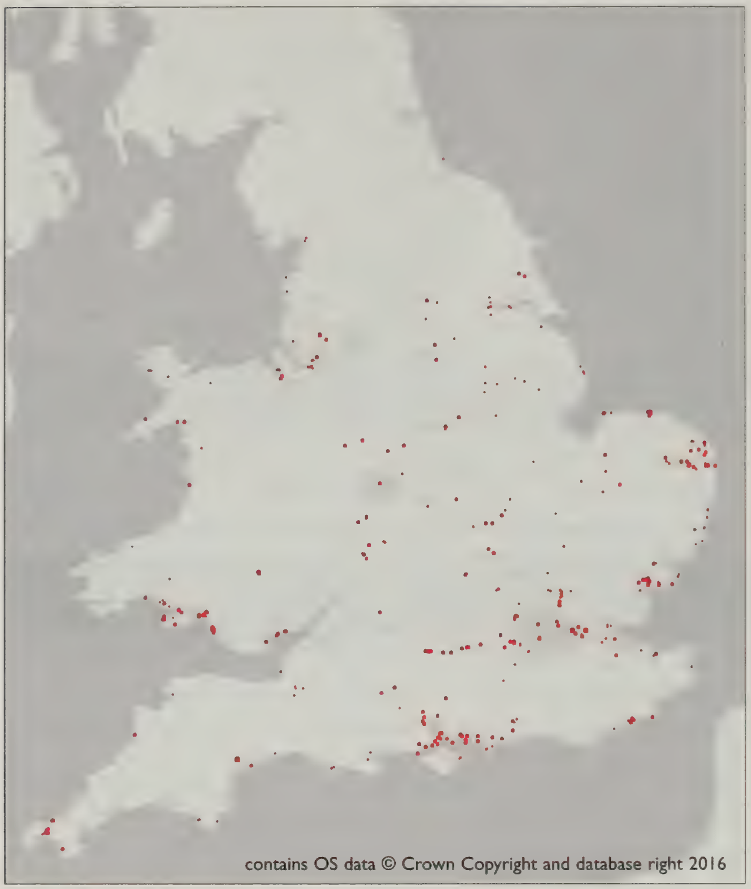


Fig. 7. The location of all Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti* records received by the RBBP where a four- or six-figure grid reference was supplied, 2012–14. Adjacent territories appear as larger dots.

1,789 singing males or territories. The population continues its recovery from the setback caused by cold winters at the beginning of this decade, although it is undoubtedly under-recorded in parts of southern England where it is now relatively widespread and numerous. The 5-year mean has declined, as the peak years of 2007–09 – when over 2,000 territories were recorded – are now lost from the calculation, but note that estimates for Suffolk and Kent are 250 and 500+ territories respectively, whereas numbers actually reported in those counties in 2014 are far lower. Denbigh & Flint had its first record of confirmed breeding, and every county of Wales where Cetti's Warblers occur reported stable or increasing numbers.

Fig. 7 shows the distribution of all records received, where a grid reference was supplied, for the 2012–14 breeding seasons, i.e. following recent milder winters. It shows the relationship with coastal areas and river valleys and how the population is still restricted to the southern half of Britain. Indeed, one in autumn 2014 in the Outer Hebrides was only the second ever in Scotland (McGowan & McInerny 2016).

Cetti's Warbler	singing males/ territories		
		Somerset	57
		Wiltshire	43
England, SW	458	England, SE	510
Avon	28	Bedfordshire	20
Cornwall	19	Berkshire	53
Devon	24	Buckinghamshire	10
Dorset	54	Essex	158
Gloucestershire	43	Greater London	21
Hampshire	165	Hertfordshire	51
Isle of Wight	25	Kent	81

Cetti's Warbler *cont.*	singing males/ territories
Oxfordshire	12
Surrey	26
Sussex	78
England, E	445
Cambridgeshire	86
Lincolnshire	27
Norfolk	118
Northamptonshire	40
Suffolk	174
England, C	94
Derbyshire	28
Leicestershire & Rutland	16
Nottinghamshire	21
Staffordshire	8
Warwickshire	15
West Midlands	1
Worcestershire	5
England, N	40
Cheshire & Wirral	6
Greater Manchester	7
Lancashire & N Merseyside	15
Yorkshire	12
Wales	222
Anglesey	8
Breconshire	5
Caernarfonshire	8
Carmarthenshire	24
Ceredigion	2
Denbigh & Flint	1
East Glamorgan	29
Gower	41
Gwent	81
Meirionnydd	1
Pembrokeshire	22
Channel Islands	20
Jersey	20
TOTAL	1,789

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male, the second consecutive year that a territorial male was reported.

Scotland, S

Lothian One site: a male singing from 7th to 22nd June.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. This is the first record of Pallas's Leaf Warbler in our reports and follows more regular overwintering by a species which is typically a late-autumn vagrant along the east coast (White & Kehoe 2016b).

England, E

Norfolk One site: a male singing from 30th March to 10th April.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. A long-staying singing bird in Orkney was well to the north of any previous potential breeding record; the only other Scottish record in the RBBP files was in Lothian in 2006. Only one other Iberian Chiffchaff was reported in 2014, in Yorkshire. This was found on a more typical date, in mid April, but the bird stayed for only two days (Hudson *et al.* 2015).

Scotland, N & W

Orkney One site: a male singing from 9th June to 8th July.

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*

Potential breeder

One site: one singing male. This was only the eighth British record of this mainly Mediterranean species (Hudson *et al.* 2015); surprisingly, it has appeared in RBBP reports twice before, in

Yorkshire in 1992 (Ogilvie *et al.* 1995) and in Devon in 1999 (Ogilvie *et al.* 2001), although the 2014 bird stayed longer and showed more signs of a genuine breeding attempt.

England, E
Norfolk One site: a first-summer male singing from 2nd to 18th June that built three nests, but no female was seen.

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*

Less scarce: 3,214 bp (Wotton et *al.* 2009) **Coverage: moderate** Amber

819 territories.

Dartford Warbler	total pairs
England, SW	424
Cornwall	13
Devon	36
Dorset	91
Hampshire	258
Isle of Wight	6
Somerset	20
England, SE	235
Bedfordshire	1
Berkshire	18
Surrey	187
Sussex	29
England, E	80
Norfolk	5
Suffolk	75
England, C	1
Staffordshire	1
Wales	29
Caernarfonshire	4
Gower	15
Pembrokeshire	10
Channel Islands	50
Jersey	50
TOTAL	819

Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 6 bp **Coverage: near-complete** Red

Six sites: 0–6 pairs. In addition to the records below, an apparently short-staying singing bird was noted in **Somerset**, on 26th–28th April, and a third singing bird in Cambridgeshire was heard on only one date, 4th June (Hudson *et al.* 2015). The total of six shows an improvement after two lean years, though ten birds were reported in 2010 and 2011.

England, E
Cambridgeshire Two sites: (1) one singing male, 13th May to 6th July; (2) one singing male, 12th June to 31st July. **Norfolk** One site: one singing male, 3rd–30th May. **Suffolk** One site: one singing male, 8th–19th June at least.
Wales
Gwent One site: one singing male, 24th May to 8th June.
Scotland, Mid
North-east Scotland One site: one singing male, 29th May to 15th June.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Occasional breeder; last bred in 2009

One site: 0–1 pairs. As in 2013, another late spring songster in Highland, where breeding has occurred in the past.

Scotland, N & W
Highland One site: one singing male from at least 31st May to 4th June.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Potential breeder

One site: 0–1 pairs. BBRC reports show a significant recent increase in records of this species, which was removed from the BBRC list at the end of 2014. No fewer than 19 were reported in spring 2014 (Hudson *et al.* 2015), almost all of them in song, but most were short-stayers. All were found in coastal areas but this is a species that could easily be overlooked inland. The species' breeding range is extending westwards in northern Europe, where it favours riverine woodlands and the edges of marshes with rank herbaceous vegetation, so the song of Blyth's Reed Warbler is one with which birders should perhaps be familiarising themselves.

Scotland, S

Clyde Islands One site: one singing male from 19th June to 5th July.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 8 bp **Coverage: high** **Red**

Six sites: 2–8 pairs. The 2014 breeding records occurred in what are now typical locations: east-coast sites with rank vegetation.

England, SE

Essex Two sites: (1) One probable and one possible breeding pairs; (2) one singing male, probably nest-building, but reported only on one date in late May. **Sussex** One site: one singing male, 8th–20th June.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: one pair bred, fledging two young.

Scotland, N & W

Fair Isle One site: two singing males remained after an arrival of migrants in June, staying until 5th and 17th July respectively. **Shetland** One site: one pair bred, singing from 12th June (with a second male on 14th June), and at least one fledged juvenile seen from mid July.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Potential breeder

One site: 0–1 pairs. The majority of British records are of males in song but most are short-stayers. We include only the longer-staying birds here and we still await proof of a pair at a potential breeding site.

England, SE

Kent One site: One singing male from 23rd May to 10th June.

Fair Isle Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 36 bp **Coverage: near-complete** **Red**

The all-island survey in 2014 revealed 41 territories, the highest total since the late 1960s. The first fledged chicks were seen on 2nd June, just one day later than the earliest-ever first-fledging date.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 13 bp **Coverage: low** **Red**

17 sites: 6–17 pairs. This is one of several species breeding in Scotland which is greatly under-recorded. Visitors to northern Scotland between mid May and July should be on the lookout for Redwings and follow up any sightings to look for breeding evidence if possible.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 16 sites: six pairs bred, three probable and one possible breeding pairs, six singing males. **Outer Hebrides** One site: one possible breeding pair. One bird seen on 27th July.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Rare: 5-yr mean 59 bp **Coverage: moderate** **Red**

54 sites: 25–68 pairs. In addition to the list below, there were some reports of apparently recently fledged juveniles in late July or August in areas where no breeding was known to have occurred

(for example on the **Isle of May** and in **Buckinghamshire**), suggesting that pairs had nested close by, perhaps in areas with restricted access. Black Redstarts in Britain often favour industrial or 'brownfield' sites, so it is likely that there are a number of overlooked pairs; hence the coverage statement is amended from high to moderate.

England, SW
Hampshire Two sites: (1) one pair bred; (2) one singing male. **Somerset** One site: one pair bred, one singing male. This is only the second confirmed breeding record for the county (the first was in 1996).
England, SE
Berkshire One site: one pair bred. **Essex** One site: one singing male. **Greater London** 20 sites: five pairs bred, three possible breeding pairs, 17 singing males. **Kent** 11 sites: eight pairs bred, six possible breeding pairs, one singing male. **Sussex** Two sites: one pair bred, one singing male.
England, E
Norfolk Three sites: one pair bred, fledging five young; two possible breeding pairs, one singing male. **Suffolk** Two sites: two pairs bred.
England, C
Leicestershire & Rutland Two sites: (1) one pair bred, one possible breeding pair, two singing males; (2) one pair bred. **West Midlands** Three sites: one possible breeding pair, two singing males.
England, N
Cheshire & Wirral One site: one pair bred. **Co. Durham** One site: one pair bred. **Greater Manchester** One site: one singing male. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** One site: one possible breeding pair.
Wales
Breconshire One site: one singing male, at a site where breeding occurred in 2010, 2011 and 2013 (note that in the 2013 report the nest was assigned to Gwent in error). **Denbigh & Flint** One site: one pair bred.

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla f. flava*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 1 bp **Coverage: high** Amber

One site: one pair.

England, SW
Gloucestershire One site: one pair bred, fledging two young.

White Wagtail *Motacilla a. alba*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 3 bp **Coverage: high** Amber

Four sites: 2–13 pairs. Data from the Channel Islands are omitted from the 5-year mean shown above.

England, SE
Berkshire One site: one mixed pair bred. A female White Wagtail paired with a male Pied *M. a. yarrellii* fledged four young. **Sussex** One site: one pair bred, assumed to have been a mixed pair, with one *M. a. alba* feeding young on 25th May.
Scotland, N & W
Fair Isle One site: one singing male held territory from late May to 15th July but was apparently unpaired.
Channel Islands
White Wagtail is a rare but annual breeder on the islands, with a minimum of ten pairs breeding on both **Jersey** and **Guernsey**.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Less scarce: 5-yr mean: 145 bp* **Coverage: low** Red

47–169 pairs. These are typical numbers of this secretive and under-recorded species. Any record, even of a single bird, in suitable habitat from April to July should be reported as at least possible breeding. [* 2011 estimate was 500–1,000 bp (Clements 2013).]

England, SW
Gloucestershire Two pairs bred, one probable and eight possible breeding pairs. **Hampshire** In a partial

survey of the New Forest, 75 territories at 39 widespread sites were located. There were no other breeding reports elsewhere in the county. **Wiltshire** Five probable and two possible breeding pairs.

England, SE

Hertfordshire One pair bred. **Kent** No records from the breeding season were submitted, although the species is believed still to be a breeding bird in the county. **Surrey** One possible breeding pair.

England, E

Norfolk One pair bred, one possible breeding pair.

England, C

Derbyshire One probable breeding pair.

England, N

Cumbria Four pairs bred, 18 possible breeding pairs. **Lancashire & N Merseyside** Two pairs bred. **Yorkshire** One probable and two possible breeding pairs.

Wales

East Glamorgan Three probable breeding pairs. **Gwent** In the Wye Valley, a radio-tracking study located 21 breeding pairs; elsewhere, one pair bred and one probable breeding pair. **Meirionnydd** 12 pairs bred. **Radnorshire** Three pairs bred, two probable breeding pairs.

Scotland, S

Borders One site: one singing male in March.

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*

Very rare: 5-yr mean 10 bp **Coverage: low** Amber

Eight sites: 3–10 pairs. This is the third year in a row that breeding has been confirmed in Shetland.

Scotland, N & W

Highland One site: one possible breeding pair at an island site on 15th July. **Outer Hebrides** Two sites: two possible breeding pairs. **Shetland** Five sites: (1) three pairs bred; (2)–(5) four probable breeding pairs.

Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*

Potential breeder

Two sites: 0–5 pairs. This is the first time this species has been included in these reports and follows a sizeable influx in 2013. A number of individuals were reported in 2014 (see Hudson *et al.* 2015), with potential breeding behaviour among the flocks in Gloucestershire and Yorkshire. Two-barred Crossbills can breed very early in the year (*BWP*) but there was no evidence of breeding at these sites other than song and courtship feeding.

England, SW

Gloucestershire One site: Up to 16 birds frequented the area but none was recorded after 26th March. Courtship feeding was seen in late February and at least two singing males were present in March.

England, N

Yorkshire One site: three possible breeding pairs. Up to nine birds, a maximum of six males and three females, frequented a forest area. At least three males were regularly heard in song between 23rd March and 11th April, but none was seen after 7th May.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Rare: 79 bp (2011 survey) **Coverage: low** Amber

4–30 pairs. Casual records from the main breeding areas in the Cairngorms (**Highland/Moray & Nairn/North-east Scotland**) provided evidence of 26 pairs: three confirmed, seven probable and two possible breeding pairs, plus 14 other singing males. Some 13 of these were located in a survey of the Abernethy RSPB reserve. We also received reports from other mountain ranges in **Highland** (where there were two probable breeding pairs), **North-east Scotland** (one pair bred) and **Perth & Kinross** (one possible breeding pair).

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

Scarce: 862 bp (Stanbury et al. 2010) Coverage: low Red

149 pairs. Jeffs *et al.* (2016) summarised the fortunes of the now established reintroduced population in Cornwall. In 2014, 79% of nests there were successful.

England, SW

Cornwall 39 territories. **Devon** Only limited information received: a total of 108 territories and at least 13 pairs bred.

Channel Islands

Jersey Two pairs bred.

Appendix 1. Other species considered by the RBBP for which no data were received in 2014.

The following taxa are regular breeding birds in the UK but the size of their populations qualifies them to be reported annually by the RBBP. In 2014, no breeding records were submitted to the Panel.

Short-toed Treecreeper *Certhia brachydactyla*

A small breeding population of Short-toed Treecreepers occurs in woodlands, parks and large gardens on the islands of **Guernsey** and **Jersey** (Balmer *et al.* 2013).

St Kilda Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes hirtensis*

The last census was in 1993 but covered only part of the islands; 136 territories were counted. Miles (2011) summarised all published estimates, while Forrester *et al.* (2007) considered the population to be 230–250 breeding pairs.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*

No breeding records of Parrot Crossbills were received from **North-east Scotland** and the only report from **Highland** was that they were present in Abernethy Forest. Summers & Buckland (2011) estimated the Scottish population to be 131 individuals or 50 breeding pairs. An influx into south and east England in late 2013 produced no evidence of a breeding attempt.

Appendix 2. Other species considered by the RBBP and also recorded in 2014.

The following occasional or potential breeding species were recorded during the breeding season in 2014, but showed no further signs of breeding than are documented here.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

In **North-east Scotland**, a drake was present in a Common Eider *S. mollissima* colony from 25th April to 27th June.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

In **Somerset**, up to four birds were present from 7th June to 1st July at least. There was no suggestion of breeding behaviour but, given the extent of suitable habitat in the county, this is a future possibility.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

In **Perth & Kinross**, an adult was again reported in late May at a site where breeding occurred in 2009, but there was no indication that the bird was paired.

Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

In **Moray & Nairn**, an adult male was present in potentially suitable breeding habitat from mid May to mid October.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

In **Lothian**, a single bird was present in potentially suitable breeding habitat on 19th–23rd May at least, and heard singing occasionally.

Common Rosefinch *Erythrina erythrina*

In **Perth & Kinross**, a singing male on 22nd June was possibly the same bird recorded at this site in 2013.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

In **North-east Scotland**, one was reported in potential breeding habitat on 28th June.

Acknowledgments

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel would like to thank the many contributors who have supplied the data that this report is based upon. Birdwatchers across the country provide many of the original observations and we gratefully acknowledge these. In most cases, their records are made available to the RBBP only because of the hard work and diligence of those county and regional bird recorders who form a unique network of expertise across the whole of the UK. All of them do this invaluable but time-consuming work on a voluntary basis, and we salute the willing cooperation and assistance of recorders past and present. There are too many individuals to list here, but they are named individually on our website. Most recorders also reviewed an early draft of this report, helping to ensure the accuracy of the data presented.

Input from specialist study groups, conservation bodies and various key individuals also means that the report can be even more comprehensive. Valuable supplementary data were submitted from a number of national monitoring schemes, both professional and amateur. Information for many species was supplied via the Schedule 1 licensing system by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Natural England (NE), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the BTO and the RSPB. For significant additional information on Schedule 1 species we acknowledge in particular the help of Jane Barber (NE), Jez Blackburn (BTO), Amy Challis (Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme), David Raw (North of England Raptor Forum), Eimear Rooney and Marc Ruddock (Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group), Adrienne Stratford (RSPB Wales) and Bob Taylor Gill (SNH). Carl Barimore (BTO), Will George (RSPB), John Marchant (BTO) and Roddy Mavor (JNCC/RSPB/SOTEAG Seabird Monitoring Programme) were also helpful in providing access to Nest Record Scheme, RSPB reserve, Little Egret and seabird data respectively. Will has also given the benefit of his data management experience in the development and support of the RBBP database. We also thank the RSPB for additional information from species surveys they coordinate, and the BTO for allowing access to selected records from the BTO/RSPB/BirdWatch Ireland/SOC/WOS BirdTrack dataset. More generally, many individuals in these organisations provided friendly advice and information over the year, for which we are most grateful.

The Secretary would also like to thank the Panel members for their time and expertise; Jill Andrews for help with data input; and Simon Wotton, Mark Wilson and Daniel Hayhow for the background to the surveys of Eurasian Bittern, Peregrine Falcon and Red-billed Chough respectively.

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Find out more about the Panel at www.rbbp.org.uk

JNCC Joint Nature Conservation Committee

rspb giving nature a home

RBBP Rare Breeding Birds Panel

BTO Looking out for birds

Announcement

BOC/NBC/NHM joint meeting in London

There will be an all-day meeting held jointly by the British Ornithologists' Club, the Neotropical Bird Club and the Natural History Museum at the museum in South Kensington on Saturday 17th September. The meeting will include a variety of talks on Neotropical subjects by speakers Cristina Banks-Leite, Nigel Collar, Thomas Donegan, Alex Lees and Fabrice Schmitt. The meeting will also include this year's NBC AGM. Entrance to the meeting is free and starts at 10.00 hrs in the Flett Lecture Theatre, accessed from the Exhibition Road entrance of the museum. For full details see: www.neotropicalbirdclub.org/nbcbocnhm-one-day-conference-17-september-2016

Obituary

Hugh Boyd (1925–2016)

On 3rd July 2016, Hugh Boyd passed away in Ottawa, Canada, at the age of 91. The world of ornithology lost a pioneer and huge source of much inspiration; we lost a mentor and very dear friend. Gentle, softly spoken and modest throughout his life, Hugh maintained a steely determination to gather strong scientific support for developing evidence-based nature conservation policy during a career that spanned six decades in both Europe and North America.

Although Hugh never finished his formal university education, his sharp intellect, powers of careful observational and analytical nature more than made up for any lack of formal academic training. He relied on a keen, questioning mind to apply the results of logical, common-sense field observations to address the great ornithological questions of his time.

In 1949, after a period as warden on Lundy, Devon, he was employed by Peter Scott as the first-ever research biologist at the fledgling Severn Wildfowl Trust (now the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust), at Slimbridge. Hugh threw himself into the development of the very scientific methods that continue to underpin our conservation of waterfowl populations to this day, and which we now take for granted. Along with Peter, Hugh was quick to recognise the need for annual surveys of Pink-footed *Anser brachyrhynchus* and Greylag Geese *A. anser*, in order to assess the changes in their annual abundance, and subsequently the need to identify age ratios in the field, to understand the contribution made to annual changes in abundance by variation in reproductive success. In turn, this led to the need to generate annual survival rates, which initially involved their pioneering catches of moulting Pink-footed Geese in Thjórsárver, in central Iceland, and subsequently resulted in the development of rocket-netting and ringing of these species on their wintering grounds. After visiting North American waterfowl biologists, Hugh introduced to Britain the use of aerial surveys of wildfowl, such as the Greenland Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* wintering population (scattered from Orkney to Co. Kerry), a survey that continues to this day. Hugh worked with wildfowlers and was quick to recognise that the size of the annual hunting kill was of fundamental importance to waterbird management and that collaboration with hunters could also generate crucial information about reproductive success (samples of duck wings in the hunting bags could generate reliable age ratios). Rapidly, the Trust broadened its focus to apply the above techniques to other species of wildfowl and to develop the citizen science networks and analytical techniques that now play such a vital role in the integrated population monitoring of all bird species.

In the early 1960s, Hugh was already fascinated by the drivers of demography and was a pioneer in assessing, for instance, the factors that affected the annual reproductive success of White-fronted Geese *A. albifrons*, as measured when they arrived at Slimbridge for the winter, since the Cold War denied him access to their Arctic Russian breeding areas. This interest persisted throughout his life and he was among the first to study the effects of climatic variability on the distribution patterns, survival rates, and reproductive performance of geese, ducks and waders around the entire northern hemisphere, long before 'climate change' became a key focus of wildlife research. Above all, Hugh was a patient and incisive observer of behaviour, who undoubtedly benefited from the 'hothouse environment' of the early days at Slimbridge, when Peter Scott engineered regular visits by the likes of Niko Tinbergen and Konrad Lorenz. Hugh's 1953 paper on the benefits of family cohesion among European White-fronted Geese remains a classic.

Eventually, Hugh moved on, first to Scotland – seconded to the Nature Conservancy to work on his beloved geese – and then, in 1967, to the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), where he was appointed Head of Research for Eastern Canada. He was quickly promoted to Chief of Migratory Birds in CWS, where he set about the development of ornithology, which he rapidly transformed within Canada. He established the first seabird programme in 1971, recruiting Dick Brown to expand his pioneer work using boat transects to collect what we now know as seabirds-at-sea data, which at that time were almost unknown. The wader research that he started at Slimbridge was developed further in Canada, and continues to the present day under the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group. However, it was really in his massive contribution to managing the huntable waterbird species of continental North America that will be remembered as the legacy of Hugh Boyd there, laying the foundations for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan that followed and which shapes all waterbird management on the continent to this day.

Hugh was instrumental in getting Canada to join the Ramsar Convention as the 29th signatory, in 1981, listing 30 major global wetlands in the following eight years. His influence also led to the USA and several South American states joining Ramsar in subsequent years. His contribution was recognised with his award as a Member of the Order of Canada in 2003 and invested in 2004.

Malcolm Ogilvie

293. Hugh Boyd with two Greylag Geese *Anser anser* in Scotland, November 1963.

Hugh always placed great emphasis on the need for not just good science, but to publish that work. He also recognised the need to publish at different levels to reach different audiences. He himself published at least 185 refereed books and scientific papers between 1947 (his first paper was on the Common Coot *Fulica atra*, in *British Birds*, *BB* 40: 199–203) and 2012, on an extraordinary diversity of subjects. He was of enormous encouragement to others, and used those skills to good effect as the editor of *Wildfowl* and of all of the CWS publication series. He was mentor to and supporter of so many young scientists and was a role model in contributing to their development.

After his retirement, in 1991, Hugh continued his studies of the effects of climate change on waders and wildfowl of the northern hemisphere, and continued his editorial responsibilities. He played a major backroom role in the efforts to manage the burgeoning size of Lesser Snow Goose *Anser caerulesens* populations in North America. Most of all, however, we remember his enthusiasm for the Arctic, for northern latitudes and their birds, where he was to be seen clambering in and out of helicopters doing aerial surveys and shivering in freezing hides watching geese well into his seventies.

He was the recipient of the first Peter Scott Medal from WWT, in 1996, for ‘his relentless pursuit of scientific evidence and promotion of its use in policy-making on conservation on two continents’ and the Canadian Society of Ornithologist’s Doris Huestis Speris Awards for outstanding contributions to Canadian Ornithology (1997). Above all, Hugh was great company, especially in the field, with a wicked sense of humour, deep warmth and understanding, both of people and of birds. He will be sorely missed, not only by his wife Gillian, three sons and grandchildren, but by his very many admirers, colleagues and friends all over the world.

Tony Fox and Malcolm Ogilvie

Notes

Kleptoparasitism by Great Cormorant on Grey Heron

On 17th September 2015, I was watching a Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* attempting to fish in the very shallow pond in front of the ISBG Hide at Lower Moors, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly. After spending at least five minutes swimming just under the surface and apparently not catching anything, despite the presence of at least some fairly large grey mullet (probably *Chelon labrosus*) and other, smaller fish, it climbed onto the mud spit in the middle of the pond and started drying out. A Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* was present throughout and the Cormorant often swam underwater very close to the Heron.

Shortly afterwards, the Heron started fishing and was soon successful in catching a small fish, about 5 cm long. The Cormorant immediately lumbered towards the Heron, snatched the fish directly from the latter's bill and waddled off to eat it. After perhaps two or three minutes, the Heron began fishing again. Once more it was quickly successful and this time caught a larger fish (about 10 cm long). Before it had time to swallow it, the Cormorant again charged and once more took the fish directly from the Heron's bill and devoured it. Nothing further happened during the next ten minutes, after which I had to leave the hide. Both birds were probably present on and off over the next two weeks but I am not aware of any similar behaviour being observed.

I have not been able to find any reference to kleptoparasitism by the Cormorant on any other species and references involving the Grey Heron refer almost entirely to intraspecific theft. The only reference to Cormorant that I can find involves the opposite of what I observed – two observations of kleptoparasitism by Grey Herons on Cormorants, one by a single Heron, one by a group of Herons (Lekuona 2002).

Reference

Lekuona, J. M. 2002. Kleptoparasitism in wintering Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. *Folia Zoologica* 51(3): 215–220.

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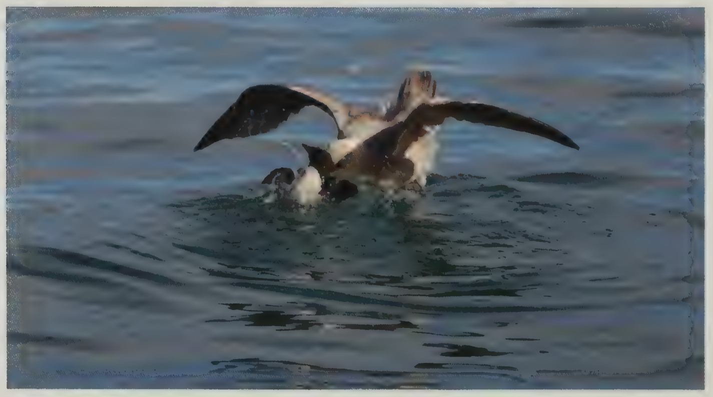
Northern Fulmars attacking and eating juvenile Brünnich's Guillemots

On 18th August 2014, at Akpait, Baffin Island, Canada, we watched the mass fledging of Brünnich's Guillemots *Uria lomvia* from cliffs high above our vantage point on the Zodiacs of an expedition ship. Occasionally juveniles settled on the water around us without an accompanying parent. These unaccompanied minors were quickly spotted and eaten by predators, mostly Glaucous Gulls *Larus hyperboreus*. We also watched one Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* swim up to a juvenile guillemot then peck at it to kill it,


Derek Holwill

294. Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* killing and eating a Brünnich's Guillemot *Uria lomvia* chick, Baffin Island, Canada, August 2014.

before eating it (plate 294). A week later, at Prince Leopold Island, SB observed similar predation of Brünnich's Guillemot chicks by Northern Fulmar. There appears to be no reference to this behaviour by Northern Fulmar in the literature, although Given (1985) described two Fulmars attacking and killing (but not eating) an exhausted Little Auk *Alle alle* off the Northumberland coast in February 1983.

Reference

Given, D. 1985. Fulmars attacking and killing Little Auk. *Brit. Birds* 78: 451.

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Low-light hunting by coastal Peregrine Falcons

Crepuscular and nocturnal hunting behaviour by Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* has received much attention recently, particularly in urban areas with high levels of artificial light (Drewitt & Dixon 2008; Drewitt 2014). This behaviour has also been observed in Peregrines breeding in coastal habitats; Wynn *et al.* (2010) and Collins *et al.* (2014) reported Peregrines taking seabirds nocturnally and provided direct evidence from remote cameras.

Lundy island, some 16 km west of north Devon, has a particularly dense population of breeding Peregrines and early results from an analysis of diet show that Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus* are the principal prey, both by frequency (41.8%) and by biomass (33.3%)(Sutton 2015a, 2016). Breeding Manx Shearwaters generally gather offshore at dusk before coming ashore at night to feed their young, and they leave their burrows around dawn the following morning (Brooke 2013). To determine when the shearwaters are targeted, a remote motion sensor camera was placed on a regularly used Peregrine feeding perch within one of the nest territories in April 2015.

On 5th August 2015, an image of an adult female Peregrine with a Manx Shearwater carcase was captured at 06.08 hrs, 19 minutes after sunrise. The female proceeded to feed until at least 06.29 hrs; in that time a further 85 images were recorded and the prey was clearly identifiable in some of these, which show the shearwater's head and bill. At 07.25 hrs, a presumed juvenile landed on the perch but it is not clear whether it was fed by the female, which was last recorded at the feeding perch at 08.50 hrs. The time taken for the female to pluck and consume the shearwater suggests that it was freshly killed that morning. Peregrines tend to consume prey soon after capture at a favoured feeding perch whereas cached prey is usually half-eaten, often with the head removed and most of the plucking of feathers having already been done (Ratcliffe 1987).

Based on prey remains of species which are typically crepuscular, or nocturnal migrants, such as Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* and Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, it has been suggested that coastal Peregrines in mainland Devon also hunt in low light conditions (Sutton 2015b). Beebe (1960) first reported this behaviour in coastal Peregrines breeding on offshore islands in British Columbia, while Dixon & Richards (2005) also provided indirect evidence for nocturnal hunting from Peregrines breeding in rural areas of South Wales. It seems that low-light hunting is not restricted to Peregrines in urban areas.

Given the regularity of Peregrine predation on shearwaters on Lundy, it seems most likely that they hunt in low light conditions early in the morning, when shearwaters are returning to sea, although there may be sufficient natural light to extend the hunting period on bright nights. Peregrines have also been observed feeding on freshly killed Manx Shearwaters during the day at two other territories on the island (pers. obs.). This suggests that at least some shearwaters are being caught out at sea during the day. Continued use of remote camera technology, allied with GPS telemetry, may reveal much more about Peregrine feeding habits on Lundy.

Acknowledgment

Thanks to HM Nautical Almanac Office for providing data on time of sunrise for Lundy.

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Kleptoparasitism of Common Kingfisher by Black-headed Gull

On 1st November 2014, I was watching the gulls roosting at Grafham Water, Cambridgeshire, while also admiring a Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* hunting a favoured area to my left. At c. 16.30 hrs I heard the loud whistle of the Kingfisher repeated three times in rapid succession, which I took to be a sign of alarm. Glancing up from my telescope, I saw the Kingfisher flying past me, with a Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* in hot pursuit. As is often the case with gulls, three more Black-headeds were quickly attracted by the commotion. However, none were able to catch up with the first bird, which remained just behind the Kingfisher until it dropped a prey item that it had been carrying. This appeared to be a very small fish, at which point the lead gull landed on the water and quickly devoured it. By pacing the distance of the shoreline, and also by measuring from a map, I estimate the successful chase to have lasted for c. 120 m.

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Dragonflies in the diet of the Common Kingfisher

A recent paper (Cech & Cech 2015) presented the results of a study of non-fish prey in the diet of the Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, which the authors referred to as an exclusive fish-eater. They concluded that the catch of non-fish prey appears to be accidental, and is more likely a result of target misinterpretation (fish-like body and fish-like movement) than a Kingfisher regularly switching to prey other than fish. While this might possibly be true in respect of their study areas in the Czech Republic, it is certainly not the case elsewhere.

I have collected data on dragonflies as the food of birds for some years and am aware of a number of records referring to the Common Kingfisher. Collinge (1924–27) recorded the Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea* being taken; Schiemenz (1953) noted that many remains of dragonflies have been found in nest holes, and Robert (1958) that Kingfishers are partial to dragonfly larvae. Adult dragonflies in the diet are recorded by Glutz von Blotzheim (1962); Harper (1985) recorded one taking a Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis* while perched; and *BWP* states that insects taken include adults and nymphs of dragonflies. It is likely that dragonflies form only a minor element in the diet of this species, with nymphs being predated more often than adults. Finally, a bit of effort with Google reveals that a number of images of Common Kingfishers with dragonfly prey are available.

References

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Jackdaws feeding on wasps

On 1st November 2015, I was watching from an upstairs window of my house in Cley, Norfolk, looking out over the adjacent roofs and their clay tiles. The weather was warm (c. 14°C) and sunny and there were many wasps around. A number were landing on the roof tiles and appeared to enter the small gaps between them, presumably returning to late nests (rather than seeking shelter for the winter, since workers do not survive the winter).

As I watched, several Jackdaws *Corvus monedula* alighted on the roofs and attempted to catch the wasps before they went under the tiles. They were generally successful and when they caught a wasp they removed the sting before eating it, by holding the wasp down with their claws, and removing the sting with their bill. Initially, I assumed that the event was a chance happening, but during a period of some 30 minutes several Jackdaws were observed wasp-catching and one individual was seen to catch at least ten wasps.

I have not witnessed such an event previously and wonder if this is a common practice for Jackdaws?

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Editorial comment Such behaviour seems not to be common – or at best poorly recorded – although Birkhead (1974) noted a verbal report of 'a Jackdaw tearing at the nest of a ground-nesting wasp… the bird did not appear to be bothered by the adult wasps which were flying around the damaged nest.'

Reference

Birkhead, T. R. 1974. Predation by birds on social wasps. *Brit. Birds* 67: 221–229.

Predation of a colony of Barn Swallows by Eurasian Sparrowhawk

I have kept records of the breeding success of a colony of Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* in a single-storey stable block in Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire, from 2004 onwards (table 1).

On 29th August 2015, when all but three second broods had fledged successfully, a routine check revealed that a predator had found a way into the stables. The nestlings from one nest were missing and many feathers were scattered below. There were also pluckings below a second nest, although the second brood from that nest had already fledged. On 30th August, two juvenile Swallows were found on the floor, one having been decapitated.

Feral cats, responsible for the relatively poor breeding success in 2010 and 2011, were initial suspects but video footage on 29th August showed a Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, perhaps a juvenile male, flying from a perch within an open-fronted barn towards the stables, circling once and then entering. Over the next few days, this bird

295. Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* in the stable roof space, Bluntisham, September 2015 (from video footage).

Table 1. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* nests and breeding success at a stable block in Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire, 2004–15.

	no. pairs	eggs laid	young fledged	fledged as % of eggs laid
2004	6	41	34	83
2005	8	73	63	86
2006	8	71	50	70
2007	12	98	79	81
2008	15	142	117	82
2009	13	131	120	92
2010	15	141	92	65
2011	14	139	83	60
2012	8	63	53	84
2013	12	94	65	69
2014	12	126	113	90
2015	18	157	126	80

was a frequent visitor and on 1st September it was present on several occasions in the afternoon (plate 295). Most Swallows abandoned the building immediately, although a very small number did return to roost overnight until 8th September.

Attempted fly-by predation by Sparrowhawks is quite common at this site, inevitably prompting a mass mobbing, but this is the first time that I have been aware of a hawk bold enough to enter the building. Jones (1998) also described a Sparrowhawk entering a building, this time in winter.

Reference

Jones, M. 1998. Eurasian Sparrowhawk entering building. *Brit. Birds* 91: 282.

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Snow Buntings roosting in human boot prints

On 29th February 2016, at Crook Bank, Saltfleetby, in Lincolnshire, dusk was closing in as we walked back from the seashore, across the vast expanse of sand at low tide. Ahead of us, we noticed about 12 Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax nivalis* that seemed to simply vanish into the sand. The sand was completely flat with no shingle, rocks or debris. Closer observation revealed that the birds were apparently settling down to roost in the depressions made by human boot marks in the soft sand. We tried not to disturb them but could see that some of the boot holes had rough edges to them. We assumed that the birds had moved the sand with wings and/or feet to try and get their scrape as comfortable as possible before settling down.

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Reviews

Identification Guide to Birds in the Hand

By Laurent Demongin
Privately published, 2016
Pbk, 392pp; many black-and-white photographs, line-drawings
ISBN 978-2-9555019-0-0
£42.99

Identification Guide to Birds in the Hand
The 301 species most frequently caught in Western Europe
Non-Passerine and Passerine families
Identification, measurements, geographical variation, moult, sex and age
Laurent Demongin

Ringers have always relied on guides that provide specific biometric and ageing criteria to ensure that they correctly identify, age and sex any bird they capture. In this new guide, Laurent Demongin has brought together a wealth of information on the 301 species most frequently caught in western Europe (154 non-passerines, 147 passerines). In addition, a further 249 infrequently captured species (including vagrants from Siberia and North America) are included in less detail for comparison with similar but more regularly encountered species. Originally published in French, this English version has been updated and expanded to include detailed treatment of an extra 51 species, along with additional information including schematic figures of moult sequence, BTO and Euring codes and a short list of references, although the full bibliography consulted is available only online.

The layout is simple and straightforward, commencing with seven introductory chapters addressing a range of topics including terminology, measuring methods, moult, sexing and age criteria. Individual species accounts follow, which cover the identification and comparison with similar species where relevant, then work through measurements, geographical variation, moult, sex and age. Most species accounts include one or more black-and-white photographs, line-drawings or diagrams: some are relevant to a species' identification or extent of moult, others illustrate particular feathers or feather tracts used to determine age. For almost every species a simple line chart illustrates the chronological moult progression over a three-year period, making this data readily accessible and understandable. Distribution maps are also provided for a handful of species including the races of Dunlin *Calidris alpina* and Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, and European large white-headed gulls.

Inevitably, this guide will draw critical comparison with Lars Svensson's *Identification Guide to European Passerines*, last updated in 1992. For over 40 years, this has been the 'gold standard' and there can be few European ringers who haven't used a 'Svensson' at some point. For many it is a familiar and friendly reference and the first place to turn to when sexing or ageing an unfamiliar passerine. This new guide takes users beyond where Svensson left off and into the next era, and includes much more that has come to light in the 25 years since the last Svensson update.

So how do the two guides compare? The provision of in-hand biometrics data to aid passerine identification is similar in both guides. The Demongin guide includes an additional 154 non-passerines that Svensson doesn't address, although some of these are included in BTO guides to European non-passerines and waders. Moult charts, absent from Svensson, neatly illustrate moult timing and progression throughout the year. Precise information on racial variation and separation from similar, unfamiliar species is explored in greater detail by Demongin and will prove invaluable, particularly at coastal ringing sites where unfamiliar species are more likely to be encountered.

Will the Demongin guide become the new Svensson and displace it as the ringers' guide of choice? On the face of it, it certainly appears to tick all the boxes and provide much of the quality information one could possibly need to process a bird in the hand. But in trying to make this guide portable and sufficiently small to fit into a ringer's kit box, the layout has suffered. Line spacing is minimal, font size has been reduced to the almost indecipherable, the text is particularly faint and I needed a magnifying glass to read it. Compared with the larger font and clarity of Svensson, these apparent minor failings may be a serious handicap for that generation of ringers whose eyesight is not what it used to be. In A4 format it would be far more user-friendly, and perhaps this is something that might be addressed in future?

This guide will become an essential reference in ringing labs and observatories. Non-ringers will

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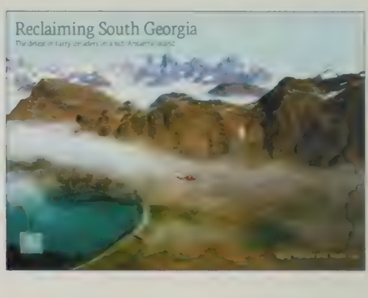
also find it a great resource, to improve their understanding of techniques used to identify, age and sex birds in the hand, some which rarely appear in field guides. And even those familiar with moult will find the moult progression charts illuminating. Just keep your magnifying glass handy.

Peter Kennerley

Reclaiming South Georgia: the defeat of furry invaders on a sub-Antarctic island

By Tony Martin and Team Rat
South Georgia Heritage Trust, 2016
Hbk, 144pp; numerous colour photographs
ISBN 978-0-9564546-3-8
£25.00 from www.sghtonline.gs/Reclaiming-South-Georgia



I've been to South Georgia once, as a tourist for a few days in March 2008 on board the old *Professor Molchanov*. After a productive crossing from Antarctica across the Scotia Sea, we slowly cruised into the Bay of Isles towards Salisbury Plain on a calm, sky-blue morning and the scenery and abundance of wildlife ahead of us was simply jaw-dropping. Once ashore, the birders quickly found a couple of South Georgia Pipits *Anthus antarcticus* before taking hundreds of photos of penguins and fur seals, but the only other pipits I saw were that afternoon on nearby rat-free Prion Island. At the time I was aware that Brown Rats *Rattus norvegicus*, an unintended legacy of the sealing and whaling eras, were a problem on mainland South Georgia. However, it took a single paragraph of masterly natural history writing early on in this book to really drive home to me the impact they have had on populations of burrowing and crevice-nesting petrels; the nocturnally silent slopes of the high ground around Grytviken (for example) contrast starkly with the cacophony and sheer mass of petrels and prions found in similar habitat on rat-free islands such as Cooper and Annenkov.

The decision in 2007 by the South Georgia Heritage Trust (SGHT) to eradicate rodents from the island was bold (apologies to SGHT, but it is difficult to find an adjective powerful enough), and Tony Martin was appointed Project Director. After introductory chapters explaining why this project was considered necessary and had to be undertaken soon, how it was to be achieved, and a descriptive tour around the island and its off-liers, the bulk of the book is simply a well-written account of the planning and logistics of the three phases of fieldwork (2011, 2013, 2015), which involved carefully scattering 302 tonnes of rodenticide bait by helicopters across 1,070 km^2 of ice-free terrain on one of the remotest and most inhospitable islands in the world. Despite having avidly followed the story via SGHT e-newsletters, I still found it page-turning stuff and read it in a single sitting; the book is also beautifully produced and illustrated by many remarkable photos. As a tale of derring-do it takes some beating, and that alone is a reason to buy this book. More importantly, it has been published as a fundraiser for the final stage of the project, a monitoring expedition in 2017/18 to validate that South Georgia is finally rodent-free – fingers are crossed for this!

The early signs, from increased numbers of pipits and pintails (the endemic South Georgia race of Yellow-billed Pintail *Anas georgica*), are positive but if procellariiformes are to benefit from the 'release' of a vast area of predator-free nesting habitat, their life-histories mean it may take several decades before population-level increases occur or are detectable. Tony Martin describes his involvement in the project as 'the experience of a lifetime', and earlier this year he was named Conservationist of the Year by the Zoological Society of London. It would be deeply satisfying to think that in 40 year's time birders approaching South Georgia by sea will encounter far greater numbers of prions, diving petrels and storm-petrels than we saw in 2008. If so, it would be appropriate that, following the custom currently performed at Ernest Shackleton's grave at Grytviken, they raise their glasses to toast the original Directors of SGHT and their financial backers for their vision, and all the members of Team Rat for their ingenuity and endurance.

Martin Heubeck

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Seabirds of the World: secret realm of the oceans' wanderers

By David Tipling
Reed New Holland, 2016
Hbk, 192pp; 151 colour photographs
ISBN 978-1-92151-767-9
£16.99, *BB* **Bookshop price £15.70**

DAVID TIPLING

The title of this book may be somewhat misleading. It is no heavyweight compendium, but rather a selection of 151 photographs taken by the author, each accompanied by a few sentences of text, and loosely ordered into five sections: at sea, the mating game, family life, seabird cities and survival. Geographically, there is a distinct bias towards the higher latitudes of both hemispheres and a slightly disappointing dearth of tropical species (particularly boobies, terns and noddies), but this may simply reflect time in the field and the extent of the author's catalogue, although he has clearly visited the Galapagos.

David Tipling's work has been used in many books and features regularly in *BB*. I am no photographer but would rank a very few of the selection as workman-like, the majority as towards the upper end of pleasing to excellent, and a few as outstanding. Two, of which I have never seen the like, feature Southern Giant Petrels *Macronectes giganteus*. The first is of two immatures, raised out of the water and squabbling belly to belly in a manner reminiscent of a pair of bull Southern Elephant Seals *Mirounga leonine* battling over territory on a South Georgia beach. The second, to which I keep returning because it is so extraordinary, is of four (I think) adults fighting over a seal carcase but taken with a slow shutter speed and therefore blurred 'to create a more painterly effect'. This is a gross understatement. The sheer aggression conveyed is almost non-avian, and if I were unfortunate enough to manage a seafront fish and chip shop on the south coast of England, I'd hang it on the wall with the caption 'Seagulls? - count yourself lucky.'

The book is well produced, apart from a few photos that are split between the very deep between-page creases, most notably the one of a Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans* cresting a breaker whose right wing is unforgivably fractured. An Appendix gives technical details for each photo and if there was an intended target audience it would probably be budding photographers, but this book would make a nice present for anyone who really appreciates seabirds.

Martin Heubeck

The Extraordinary Beauty of Birds: design, patterns and details

By Deborah Samuel
Prestel Publishing, 2016
Hbk, 288pp; 225 colour images
ISBN 978-3-7913-8203-6
£29.99

As an artist I always enjoy looking at publications from the dark side of the artistic spectrum – photography. Unfortunately in the case of this book, it is darkness that is a bit of an issue for me. There are 225 colour images, with each image presented on a 24 cm × 24 cm page. Close-up studio shots of feathers, dead birds, eggs and nests are set against a black background – therein lies the issue for me. When I open a page that presents the feather patterns of a Superb Lyrebird *Menura novaehollandiae*, Great Argus *Argusianus argus* or tail of a King Bird-of-paradise *Cicinnurus regius*, I expect the colours and patterns to leap off the page and knock my no. 6 brush clean across the room. Sadly this just doesn't happen to me with this book. I am certain that the original photos are stunning and I suspect that the rich detail and depth of colour of the originals has been lost in the printing of the book. This is clearly shown in the photo of an American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*, where it is virtually impossible to see anything other than a black page. I can't help but think that the opportunity to create an extraordinary book has been missed.

Dan Powell

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Recent reports

Compiled by Barry Nightingale and Harry Hussey

This summary of unchecked reports covers early July to early August 2016.

Headlines Ireland scooped the honours this month with a wader extravaganza at Tacumshin that included Greater Sand, Semipalmated and Pacific Golden Plovers, Western, White-rumped and Pectoral Sandpipers *Calidris melanotos* and a Long-billed Dowitcher. Elsewhere in Ireland, Terek and Semipalmated Sandpipers added to the mix. In Britain, a Western Swamphen appeared in Suffolk, creating substantial interest and speculation regarding its origin. More expected were a Collared Pratincole which lingered in Somerset, as did a Least Sandpiper in Devon (joined briefly by a second bird on its final day), Baird's Sandpipers in Suffolk and Norfolk, a Semipalmated Sandpiper in Pembrokeshire and four Spotted Sandpipers. Coastal headlands and offshore pelagics provided good passages of Cory's and Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis*, Wilson's Storm-petrels and a single Fea's Petrel.

Black Duck *Anas rubripes* Strontian (Highland), long-stayer again 2nd August. **Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis* Vane Farm (Perth & Kinross), 30th–31st July. **King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis* North-east Scotland, long-stayer to 12th July; Donegal Bay (Co. Donegal), 24th–31st July. **Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata* Records from Lothian and North-east Scotland (four). **White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta deglandi* Blackdog/Murcar (North-east Scotland), long-stayer to 6th August.

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* Findhorn Bay (Moray & Nairn), 11th–16th July.

Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma feae* Ram Head (Co. Waterford), 3rd August. **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris borealis* Porthgwarra (Cornwall), 100, 22nd July; 670 Galley Head and 368 Old Head of Kinsale (both Co. Cork), 3rd August; 153 Kerry Head and 208 Brandon Point (both Co. Kerry), 7th August; 116 Bridges of Ross (Co. Clare), 7th August. **Macaronesian Shearwater** *Puffinus baroli* One, 300 km SW of St Agnes (Scilly), 26th July. **Wilson's Storm-petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus* Scilly, from pelagics, one 21st July, two 25th, one 1st August, five 4th, two 5th, two 7th August; also singles off Cornwall 3rd August, and 100 km west of St Mary's 22nd July. In Ireland, two, 40 km SW of Slyne Head (Co. Galway), 13th July; from pelagics off Baltimore (Co. Cork), three 17th, five 24th and four 31st July; at sea, 190 km SW of Cape Clear (Co. Cork), one 21st and two 22nd July; at sea, 280 km SW of Cape Clear, four 24th July; one 6 km south of Glandore (Co. Cork), 31st July; one Brandon Point, 4th August.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* Long-stayers Ham Wall (Somerset), up to three; Old Moor (Yorkshire), to 21st July. **Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* Far Ings (Lincolnshire), 4th–6th August. **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Influx, with records from Cambridgeshire, Devon (two), Hampshire, Kent (up to five), Lancashire & N Merseyside, Norfolk (two), Suffolk, Sussex and Co. Wexford. **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Records from Norfolk and Oxfordshire. **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* Shipley, then Pulborough Brooks (both Sussex), 14th July; West Minley (Hampshire), 16th July; Worth Marsh (Kent), 23rd July; Ogston Resr (Derbyshire), 30th July; Cowlinge (Suffolk), 31st July; Soham (Cambridgeshire), 6th August.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Landguard (Suffolk), 26th July; Bridgetown (Co. Wexford), 31st July.

Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* Minsmere (Suffolk), 31st July to 5th August.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* Tacumshin (Co. Wexford), 20th–22nd July. **Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* Tacumshin, 26th July. **Greater Sand Plover** *Anarhynchus leschenaultii* Tacumshin, 20th July. **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius hudsonicus* Perranuthnoe (Cornwall), long-stayer to 7th August. **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Calidris falcinellus* Frampton Marsh

Bill Baston

296. Adult Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*, with juvenile Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*, Minsmere, Suffolk, August 2016.

(Lincolnshire), 24th–27th July. **Baird's Sandpiper** *Calidris bairdii* Minsmere, 24th–25th July; Titchwell (Norfolk), 31st July. **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis* Influx, with records from Angus & Dundee, Co. Down, Lincolnshire (two), Norfolk (two or three), North-east Scotland, Co. Wexford and Yorkshire. **Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla* Black Hole Marsh (Devon), one 2nd–3rd August, two on 4th August. **Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri* Tacumshin, 23rd–26th July. **Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla* Gann Estuary (Pembrokeshire), 4th–7th August; Reenroe (Co. Kerry), 6th–7th August. **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* North Bull (Co. Dublin), 16th July. **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius* Skokholm (Pembrokeshire), 12th July; Sutton Bingham Resr (Somerset), 4th–7th August; Hauxley (Northumberland), 4th August; South Efford Marsh (Devon), 6th–8th August. **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Tacumshin, 5th August. **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* Ham Wall, 10th–13th July.

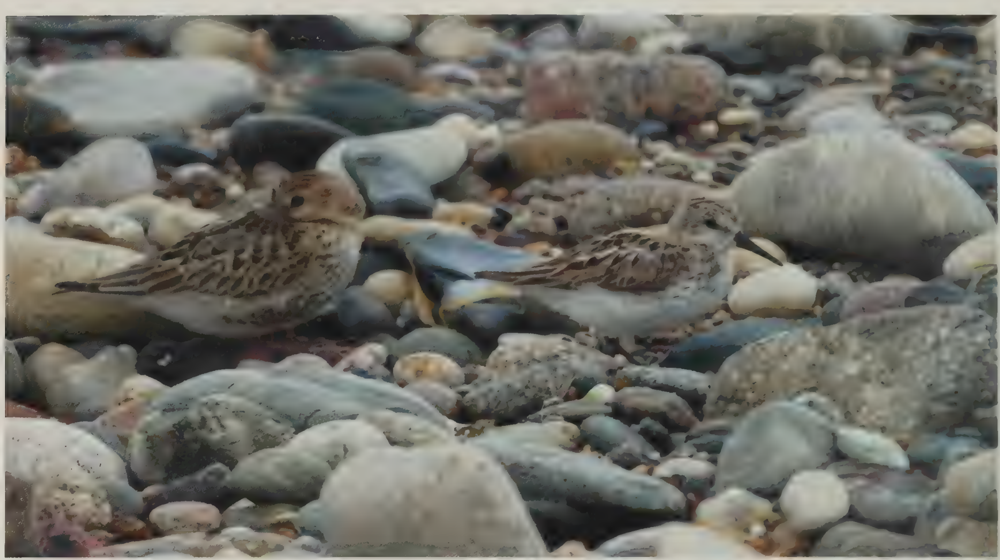
Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* Carr Vale (Derbyshire), 22nd July; same Orgreave Lagoons 22nd July, and Faxfleet (both Yorkshire), 24th July; Snettisham (Norfolk), 23rd July; Hickling Broad (Norfolk), 25th–27th July; Big Waters (Northumberland), 27th July; Minsmere, 31st July. **White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* Records from North-east Scotland and Yorkshire. **Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini* Carr Vale, 13th–20th July. **Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia* Wansbeck Estuary (Northumberland), long-stayer to 3rd August; Oare Marshes (Kent), 8th July to 7th August.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* Heacham (Norfolk), 23rd July. **European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* Records from Gloucestershire, Kent, Lothian, Suffolk and Yorkshire. **Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* St Osyth (Essex), 16th July. **Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Burgh-le-Marsh (Lincolnshire), 16th July.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* Tresco (Scilly), long-stayer to 11th July. **Savi's Warbler** *Locustella luscinioides* Strumpshaw Fen (Norfolk), long-stayer to 22nd July. **Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta* Durlston (Dorset), 26th July; Grassholm (Pembrokeshire), 5th August; Dungeness (Kent), 6th August. **Aquatic Warbler** *Acrocephalus paludicola* Carrigaholt (Co. Clare), 3rd August. **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* Minsmere, 31st July.

Notable records of commoner species

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* Ferny Ness



Killian Mullarney

297. Adult Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* (right), with Dunlin *C. alpina*, Tacumshin, Co. Wexford, July 2016.

(Lothian), 290, 29th July. **Manx Shearwater** ***Puffinus puffinus*** Start Point (Devon), 4,843, 2nd August. **Avocet** ***Recurvirostra avosetta*** Cliffe Pools (Kent), 1,120, 20th July. **Black-tailed Godwit** ***Limosa limosa*** Cliffe Pools, 1,700, 20th July; Hazelwood Marshes (Suffolk), 1,700, 6th August. **Dunlin** ***Calidris alpina*** Beacon Ponds (Yorkshire), 10,000, 25th July. **Spotted Redshank** ***Tringa erythropus*** Good numbers, including peaks of 39 Old Hall Marshes (Essex), 18 Titchwell and 12 Snettisham, 27 Minsmere and 15 Blacktoft Sands (Yorkshire). **Mediterranean Gull** ***Larus melanocephalus*** Sandwich Bay (Kent), 352, 4th August. **Yellow-legged Gull** ***Larus michahellis*** Stanwick GP (Northamptonshire), peak count in July of at least 64 on 18th; Walberswick, 50, 27th July, and Great Livermere (both Suffolk), 50, 30th July. **Sand Martin** ***Riparia riparia*** Spurn (Yorkshire), southerly movements mid July included 1,758 on 13th and 656 on 17th July.

Rarities Committee news

New member for BBRC

BBRC is pleased to announce that Nigel Jones has been elected to the Committee. Nigel has been a member of the Hampshire records committee and was nominated by them and the Hampshire county recorder for the post. Nigel has been finding rarities for a long time, and early highlights include a Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia* when he was assistant warden on Fair Isle in 1979. More recent finds have included Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*, Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*, Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* and Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides*. As the director of Ornitholidays, Nigel is particularly well travelled, with experience of potential vagrants from all parts of the globe. He is also an active ringer, and has a wide variety of ornithological interests, being one of the co-founders of the New Forest Woodcock group.

Nigel replaces Chris Bradshaw who is hanging up his hat after completing ten years on the Committee. Everyone involved with BBRC wishes to extend their thanks to Chris for all of his hard work and his contributions over the last decade.

BBRC is sponsored by Carl Zeiss Ltd and the RSPB

Chairman Paul French, 1 Greenfield Bungalows, Easington, East Yorkshire HU12 0TZ; chair@bbrc.org.uk

Secretary Nigel Hudson, Carn Ithen, Trench Lane, Old Town, St Mary's, Scilly TR21 0PA; secretary@bbrc.org.uk

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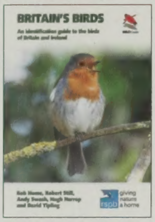

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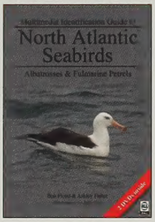

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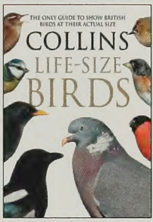

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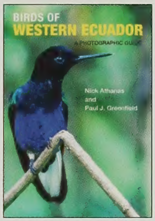

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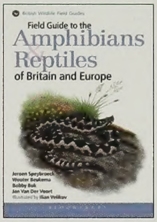

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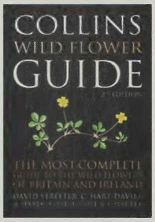

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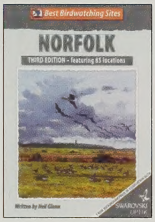

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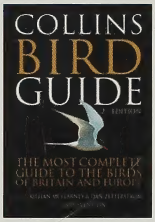

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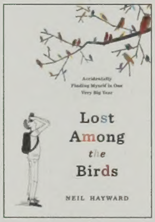

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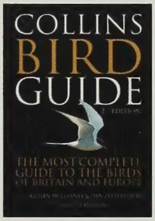

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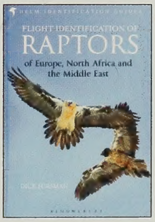

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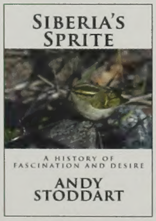

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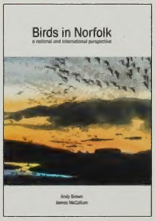

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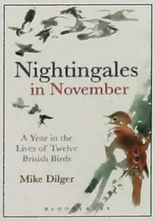

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